NEW TIMES

"I was held in a mental hospital"

March 26 – April 1, 1991

12

A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

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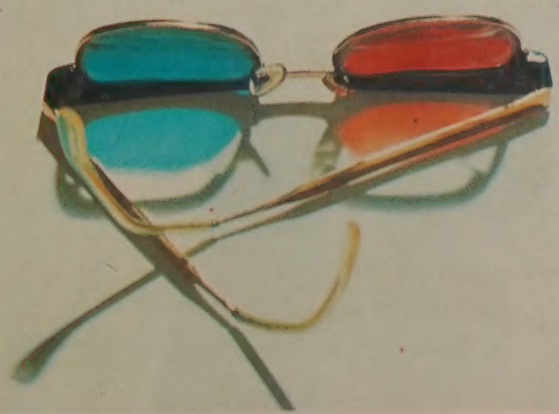
Viewing the Referendum



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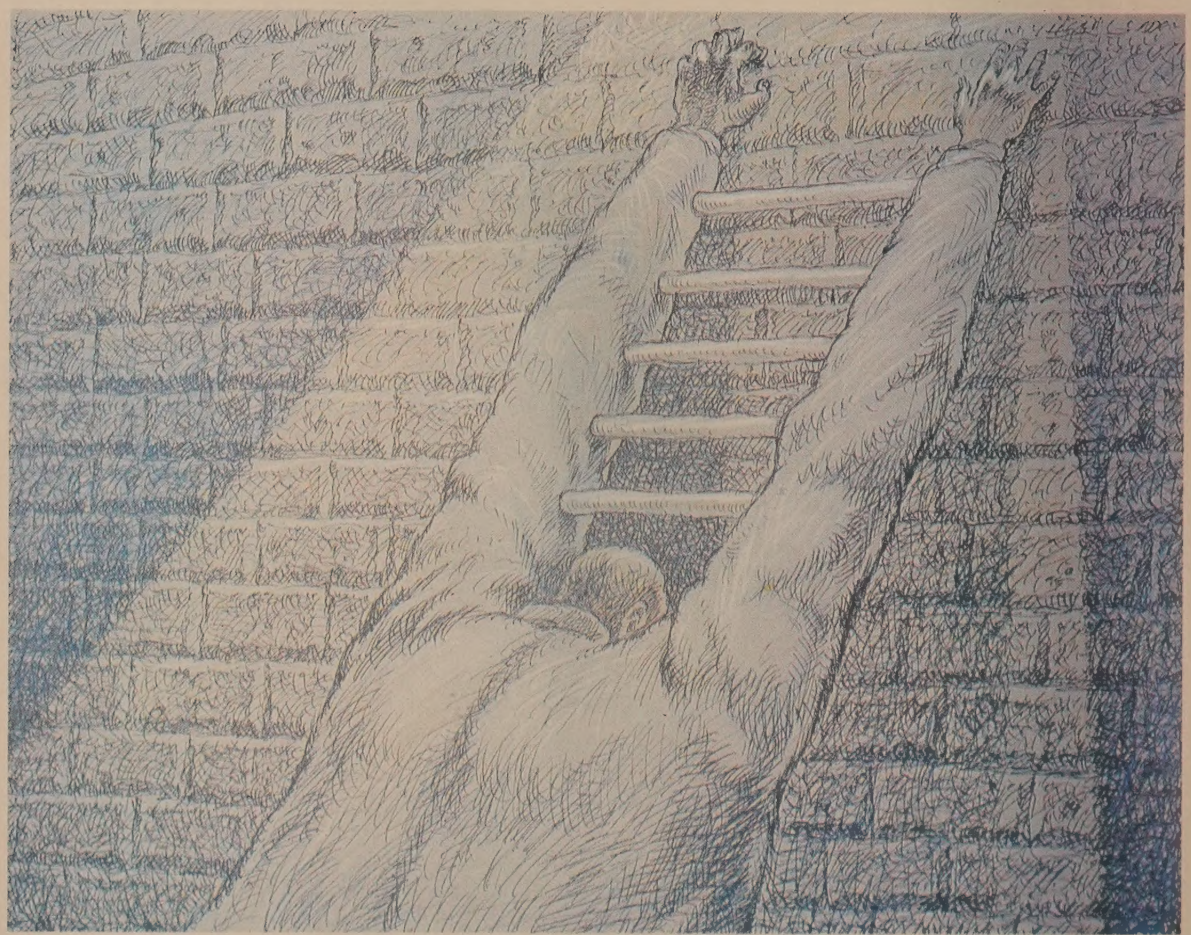

IGOR SMIRNOV

A SOVIET WEEKLY
OF WORLD AFFAIRS

NEW TIMES

No. 12, 1991
Founded 1945

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FROM OUR MAILBAG **(2)**, PEOPLE **(44)**

A British scientist on patriotism and nationalism

p. 30

Cover by Victor Brel

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From our mailbag

■ The reader A. Lugovskoi, whose letter concerning my article "Tents on Revolution Square" about the students who went on a hunger strike in Kiev was published in issue No. 7/91, doubts that "the students themselves could have opted for their road to death" and upbraids me for not saying who "criminally allured" them. I don't know who and what could have "allured" them to the square except their own patriotism. But I know the answer to some of the assertions formulated in his letter: for example, to his statement that in Putivl, where Communists and not democrats are at the helm, one can buy meat, butter, cheese and milk – something to write home about in this day and age. It is not that important what political groups are in power in small towns and in the capital. Quite recently food from all over the country was brought to Moscow and then its producers would go there to buy it. How were these actions of Communist rulers to provide food for Moscow viewed at that time by the residents of Putivl and the respected Comrade Lugovskoi? This practice has been discontinued now and in conditions when practically everything is in short supply residents of small towns suddenly got certain advantages because they have personal plots of land and by working actually on two jobs – in their place of employment and at home – they can have foodstuffs that cannot be bought at shops. The same situation exists in Putivl which I visited last fall. Unfortunately, the democrats that are so much hated by the reader of my article would not bring themselves to building a pig farm on Manezhnaya Square, ploughing up Nevsky Avenue and making the central parts of Moscow and Leningrad look more like the centre of Putivl.

And finally, the reader is outraged that the students came out against the legitimate government accusing me, for that matter, of this too. Here one comes to a question of principle: can one struggle against the legally elected government? My answer is "yes," if the struggle is carried out by legal non-violent methods, like the ones resorted to by the Ukrainian students. It cannot be excluded that it was the struggle of the students against the signing by the Ukraine of the Union Treaty that prompted the authorities to put the question about preservation of the Union to a national referendum, whereby giving everyone, including the reader A. Lugovskoi, an opportunity to express his opinion.

Anatoli Gorelov,
Doctor of Sciences
(Philosophy)
Moscow, USSR

■ It is our hope that having read the article about the Second Secretary of the Azerbaijan Communist Party Central Committee V. Polyanichko ("People," No. 7/91), the readers understand why Soviet rule has not yet been restored in Nagorny Karabakh. Polyanichko, who has been appointed chairman of the republican organizational committee for Nagorny Karabakh speaks of the dissolved regional Soviet using the following expressions: "in no case should one give power to "the newly brought to light local leaders'" whom he calls "extremists," "political spongers," "terrorists," "ideological whores" and "scoundrels who have thrown aside all restraint." This is the vocabulary of a man who has been charged with restoring peace and confidence between the two peoples.

We would also like to comment on the article by the political scientist from Baku Eldar Namazov titled "Afterword to the criticism" ("From our mailbag," No. 6/91) in connection with the mention in *New Times* of the baiting in the Azerbaijan press of People's Deputy of the USSR and well-known writer Zory Balayan. Although it looks like Namazov condemns such baiting, at the same time he displays a patent inconsistency. He also wants to upbraid Balayan for at least something, and he is looking for attacks on

The second punishment. What for?

■ Last May I was discharged from the prison camp and got a residence permit in the town of Ivdel where my relatives live.

I have done my time – ten years for petty larceny (650 rubles) – and right away I was subjected to a second punishment for the same crime: administrative supervision. I may not leave the town, visit public places or go outside after 9 p.m. Each Tuesday I must report to the local police department for registration and detailed interrogation. Besides this, the policemen come to my place both in the daytime and at night. They question my old blind mother and my neighbours and explain to everyone who I am.

Ours is a small town and all its residents know each other. People shy off me and I cannot find work. The neighbours keep tabs on my movements and try to peep into my bag when I come home from shopping. The police do not take an interest in regular crooks. The police keep coming to my place knowing well that I live below the poverty line in a dilapidated barrack: my sole possessions consist of a cot, a camp-bed and a table. They constantly shout at me if I were serf and threaten me with imprisonment although I give no cause whatsoever for such a treatment. Had I committed a most insignificant misdemeanour, they would have put me behind bars long ago. What do they do it for? First, they are trying to make me leave the town. Second, they are creating a semblance of work: police vigilance and efficient performance of duties. I am a scapegoat and my life here is hell. Of course, it is silly to wait till they find reasons to nail me. So the best way out would be to leave. But where? Where can I go in winter without a penny to bless myself with and still under administrative supervision? Who needs me and where? The only thing left for me is to steal, but here I cannot commit a crime because of my sick mother.

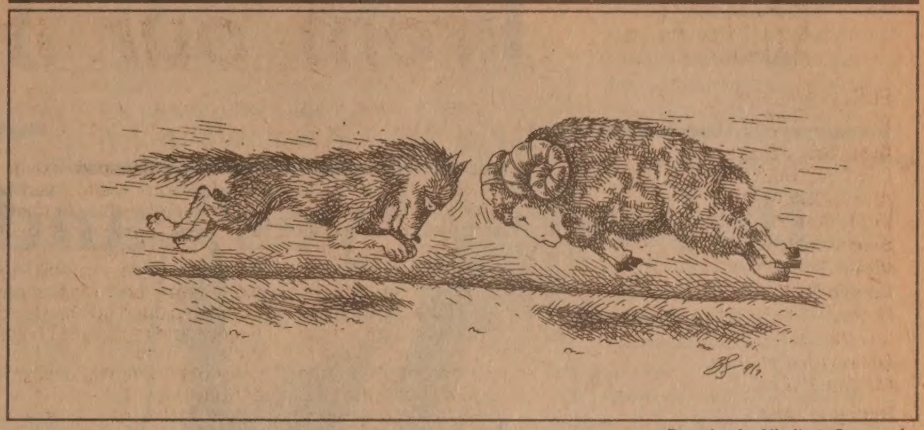
By the time you receive this letter I shall have left Ivdel – I shall go away to steal. But the sixty-four dollar question is who will be to blame for it.

V.Komissarov
Ivdel, USSR

A pig farm on Manezhnaya Square and a ploughed field on the Nevsky Avenue?

A rich vocabulary of the Secretary – peacemaker

"I smell the stench of the F.B.I. cesspools"



Drawing by Vladimir Semerenko

the Azerbaijan people in his book *The Hearth*.

We have once again looked through the book by Zory Balayan and not on a single page have we found any accusations or even a hostile word addressed to the Azerbaijan people. On the pages quoted by Namazov the author writes about the evil deeds of the Turkish invaders who in the 11th century travelled through Transcaucasia, including Armenia, leaving behind them devastation and death.

We don't lose hope that time will come when people can hear the voice of the true sons and daughters of the Azerbaijan people who in the days of pogroms, risking their lives, gave us a helping hand.

Refugees from Azerbaijan
A.Atamalyan, S.Kudryashova, M.Akopova and others
All in all 16 signatures

■ Allow me, an American Communist for 60 years, to respond to the article, "The demise of communism?" (No. 37/90), especially since your author cites another American, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who asserts that there are "absolutely no prospects for strengthening Communist ideology and Communist Parties in the world."

To speak of a loss of membership in Western Communist Parties as a sign of decay and deep crisis is, to say the least, both extremely extravagant and superficial. When, at the start of NEP, the Bolshevik Party lost half its members in protest against NEP, was that a sign of decay and deep crisis in the Party? To report the findings of an opinion poll in France that 41.3 percent of white-collar workers and 29 percent of blue-collar workers find "the CPF as the least attractive political force" – and fail to point out that 58.7 percent and 71 percent do not support that view – points to an inclination to picture the worst case about the CPF.

To charge the leadership of the Communist Party of the United States with disagreeing with the current policies of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is to do mayhem to the truth and to misinform your readers. The CPUSA has, on many occasions, expressed full support for Gorbachev's foreign policy and recognized the necessity for perestroika and glasnost.

This *NT* material, like some other articles in your magazine and in *Moscow News* reeks with the stench of the F.B.I. cesspools.

James West
member, National Board, CPUSA
New York

■ I read your most recent issue. I have a few comments. The first is about your prison camps.

First, I'd like to say that we in the USA have such camps as well, though they tend to be located in the Southern parts of the US, and the people who go to jail tend to be Black and Hispanic. I do recognize, however, that politics can be quite a problem when combined with whether or not a person goes to jail. Recently in the US, the Supreme Court ruled that politicians couldn't give people special positions because of being in office. Perhaps the difference between the US and the USSR is that in Russia just being in the Party gets you privileges, whereas in America, you have to be elected first. So too, does being in power determine whether or not you go to prison. My intuition is that when there are more people in elected office who truly represent the people in the Soviet Union, then these abuses of power will go down.

I oppose capital punishment. One of your readers wrote that he would strangle a killer if he could, "with his bare hands." Then he would be a killer, and the state would have to kill him. Somebody has to be the executioner, and while it may be a necessary job, I feel that such an individual would have to become hardened to spiritual values, and to ordinary society. I wouldn't pull the trigger, would you? Capital punishment hasn't worked here, why would it do any better in your society?

Donald Wilton,
California, USA

Compiled by
Tatiana Chernova

The interlanguage against the nuclear threat

■ Now it is clear for everyone that the mankind's struggle for survival in the conditions of global threats (nuclear, ecological) calls for an increased mutual understanding among all peoples. But I think that there is a serious obstacle on the way to such an understanding – the absence on our planet of a common language.

In the 19th century, the Polish linguist Ludwik Zamenhof created an artificial language, the Esperanto; nowadays thousands of enthusiasts speak this language, mostly in European countries. But it is quite evident that the speed with which people master that language lags behind the demands of the time. In my view, the main reason for this is that people fear that if they switched to the Esperanto they might lose their native language as the basis of their national culture, although I think that their fears are groundless. For example, in the United States there live people of different nationalities, but English is used as the national language.

The efforts of the peoples of our planet to master a common language should be coordinated. This makes it necessary to work out, for example, in the framework of UNESCO, a single programme, the "Interlanguage." I think such a programme should include the following:

– selection of a common international language through national referendums in the countries, members of the UN;

– creation of a world fund for the study of the interlanguage. The fund will train teachers, create requisite equipment, teaching aids, etc.

The "Interlanguage" programme should provide for the teaching of the language from early childhood.

I think that English which is already spoken in many countries of the world will be most suitable as a common language.

F. Materikin
Moscow, USSR

POLITICAL LIFE

Between "yes" and "no"

Nine republican, one half-Union and many district answers have been given to the referendum question

Drawing by Arkady Gursky

"Did you ask people?" This question has often been repeated in our country over the past few years. The March 17 referendum was the first attempt to find out the opinion of "the entire Soviet people." Each of the numerous nationalities living in the Soviet Union, one-sixth of the world's dry land, has its own needs, history and culture. Sometimes it is evidently useful to find out the "average" view. But it is senseless and perhaps even harmful to find out the average view with the aim of imposing it on all the nationalities living within the present frontiers of the USSR.

Speaking about the informational value of the referendum, we did not learn anything which was not known before, as a result of opinion polls in particular. The referendum has created additional tension in society, aggravated all contradictions to the utmost, and intensified the political struggle.

At the same time, preparations for the referendum, disputes and clashes of opinions, in particular between the two main – Union and Russian – leaders, brought to light tendencies in political life which had not been clear to everyone before.

First of all, the Union referendum provoked Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn into holding polls and plebiscites in their own republics. For various reasons throughout the past year the Baltic republics refrained from organizing polls, though the central government kept repeating: "Did you ask the people?" The Lithuanians, Letts and Estonians have been asked now, and it has become clear that the majority of people in the three Baltic republics firmly decided to leave the Soviet Union. They were finally persuaded to do so by the January events in Vilnius and Riga. People in the Baltic republics interpreted them as attempts to overthrow the legal republican governments by force and establish direct presidential rule there.

The decision to hold a referendum confronted all republics with a choice, and six of them demonstrated by their refusal to take part in the referendum and in the drafting of the Treaty of Union that they intend to withdraw from the USSR. This is hardly the result which the organizers of the referendum wanted to achieve.

It became clear at the same time that the peoples of Russia and Byelorussia want to be integrated in a new federation that will preserve their historic ties. The Central Asian republics are ready to join them while the Ukraine is at a crossroads. No matter how the republics would behave in regard to the Union, the general desire for independence from the central government has increased markedly over the past two months. During this time the republics have stated their sovereignty even more firmly than before.

Moscow did not count on this result either. Organizing the referendum, the Union leadership hoped to receive a firm "yes" which could be interpreted as an absolute vote of confidence. The referendum could not have a practical aim in any case. Moscow explained beforehand that it would accept only a positive answer. Anatoly Lukyanov, chairman of the Soviet parliament, said that a negative reply would not change anything. The Union would be preserved in any case. Even if any republic does not sign a new Treaty of Union it will remain in the Union under the old treaty.

But, say, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, joined to the Union in 1940, did not sign any treaty.

Moscow has put the question point-blank: he who is not with us is against us. But instead of solid support of the Union and, accordingly, strong central government, the referendum produced a strange answer: neither yes nor no. In spite of all predictions – it was explained to us that the weakening of the Union would be followed by civil war, millions of refugees, and the breakup of the single economic space – the support of the central government diminished during the referendum campaign. The results of the referendum, disputes over it, and huge rallies with anti-government slogans can in no way be assessed as an approval of Moscow's line, nor can they be regarded as the "go-ahead" for a tougher policy and the introduction of presidential rule in disobedient regions or in the country as a whole.

One more result of the tense atmosphere created on the eve of the referendum is a speedier drafting of the Treaty of Union. The draft was quickly completed and published as the last argument in favour of preserving the Union. The merits of this draft, compared with existing documents of a constitutional type, are evident. In spite of all its flaws and contradictions, it is a step forward towards democratization, a sketch of new thinking within the country.

The draft records much of what the republics have been desperately fighting for in recent years. Three years ago this document would perhaps have halted the seccession of republics from the Union. The point is, however, that our Union government always lags two steps behind life. The draft was signed by only eight republics, it was published before its discussion by republican Supreme Soviets so that it would appear prior to the referendum. However, it did not influence the results of the referendum.

The discussion of the questions put for the referendum went far beyond the framework of a future Union. As usual, people link one or another policy with concrete leaders. The "yes" vote, inevitable for many people, became a vote for Gorbachev, while the support of the idea of Russian presidency was a vote for Yeltsin. Both leaders will interpret the results of voting in their own ways. While the election of a president in Russia seems unavoidable, the fate of a new federation is not clear, and the referendum did not make it clearer.

The vagueness of the main question led to equally vague results contrary to the hopes of the referendum organizers that people will vote not for details, but, in principle, for the sound idea of brotherhood and unity. This idea, taken in its "pure form," does not inspire people any longer. The preparation and holding of the first referendum showed that only a clearly and reasonably formulated question can be put for popular vote.

The first attempt to solve problems by a referendum, by the "entire people" also revealed the flaws in the law on the referendum, first of all, in regard to the idea that laws can be adopted, the fate of peoples decided and the Constitution amended by a simple majority of, say, 51 percent. If the referendum was organized, as the present one, to clear up public opinion, the law gives a free hand to the authorities; the results must be "taken into account during the adoption of decisions by appropriate bodies."

One can only guess what will be done now by "appropriate bodies" after nine republican, one average half-Union and many local answers have been given to the referendum.

Nikolai Popov

An illegal yoke

Simon Soloveichik

Is the "free-market economy" as much of a chimera as "communism" has been?

WHAT'S GOING ON? It is common knowledge that we are heading for the free-market economy. All we see on the TV, and all we read in the papers is: "In a situation where we are going to a free market..." "At the time when the country is changing over to the free market economy..." "How is your enterprise preparing for work under the conditions of the free-market economy?"

As one listens to all this, one can't help recalling the phrase: "We are advancing towards communism". In the same way, we hear words about the deadline (20 years), the same sing-song intonations; as before, we are called upon to discern the "tangible signs of communism", although these are the "signs of the free market". The economists say, though, that our country hasn't had a day of progress towards the market yet...

This is just another campaign. We have had no end of sowing campaigns without harvesting campaigns. It makes no difference where to head for – the free market or communism – as long as nothing changes.

Some force is holding and restraining the nation, a grim force which oppresses it and does not let it go like an invisible Tartar-Mongol yoke or, as Pushkin put it in a private letter, "an illegal yoke".

WHAT'S GOING ON? Everybody is bidding the last farewell to perestroika, and in any American magazine one can read that Gorbachev is now surrounded not by "Sovietniki but by chinovniki" who "say what he wants to hear and who do not make politics but conduct it". Is this regress? This word has been current in the papers, but it has not taken root. The whole thing seems to be a lot more serious than just the matter of going ahead or receding.

Let us ponder over the following string of words: a conspiracy, a rebellion, a coup, an uprising, a reform, perestroika. The uprising of 1905 was followed by reforms. An uprising took place in February, 1917, followed by a coup and perestroika.

All those events were accompanied by a modification or a change in the political system of government. But when property, not only political power, changes hands, this enormous social change alone can be named a revolution. In October, 1917, we had a conspiracy, followed by an uprising and only then by the Great October Socialist Revolution – all these words are correct. We have got accustomed to identifying the word "revolution" with blood, it has become fashionable to repeat: "I am against the revolution", "we have had enough of revolutions"; however, revolutions are, more often than not, bloodless.

A coup is a matter of hours, of one night; a revolution means years of reconstruction. Coups and uprisings are violent, fratricidal acts but civil wars which commonly accompany revolutions, are by no means obligatory.

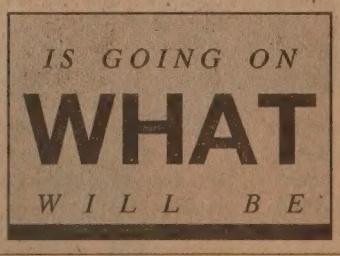
WHAT'S GOING ON? A quiet coup, which put the radical wing of the Party in power, was followed by perestroika – the reforming of many structures. Gradually, it began to assume a new quality – the question of power became the question of ownership. Perestroika became a revolution.

It will become clear much later which adjective will apply to this unannounced revolution: people's, democratic, radical, post-socialist, or whatever. So far, one thing is clear – this is a revolution. When faced with a choice of what and whom we are for, we ought to think not only about personalities, and not only about power, but about property as well. This is the main thing on which our attitude to the authorities and personalities depends.

WHO IS THE PROPERTY OWNER HERE. In the capitalist society almost all property belongs to corporations and private individuals. But who owns it in socialist countries?

The spectrum of answers to this question ranges from the radiant "National" to the grim "Nobody's". The prosecutors, however, believe that all of it is state-owned, and thieves are punished for the embezzlement of public property. This socialist property is a queer thing. It is revered as national, protected as state-owned, and stolen as nobody's.

Well, whom does this all belong to, whose property is scattered all over our vast territory, who is in control of all the factories and plants, who appoints managers and ministers, who gives and takes, divides and distributes, who is the boss? Or is there any?



There is one. There is such a Party! There is such a property-owner – only of a special kind. Why special? Because when it comes to ownership rights, he certainly owns all, no doubt about that, but when it comes to responsibility for mismanagement, he shrugs it off.

From the very outset, the Bol-

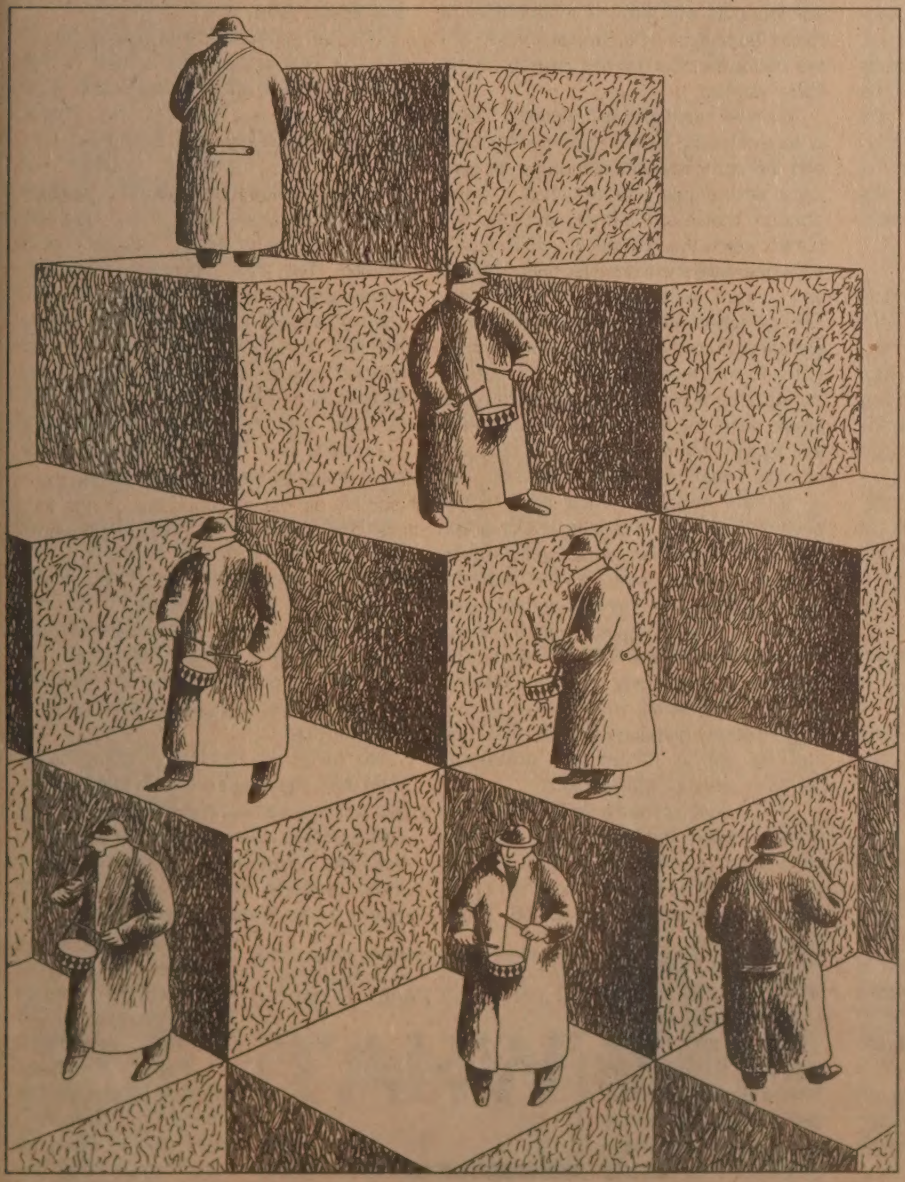
Drawing by Arkady Gursky

shevik party was set as an iceberg, with its tip in sight and the rest "under the water". One of the most violent clashes in its history was that between "Likvidatori" (who demanded an end to the illegal "underwater" part) and "Otzovisti" who insisted that Party delegates be withdrawn from legal organizations. This combination of the legal and the illegal, essential for underground work, remained after the Party had taken over power. The Party did not give away what it had taken hold of, and kept it upon emerging from the underground. Almost all the Party documents bear the caption "Top Secret", and for quite a while the Secretary of a Party Committee received one pay legally, and two or three others, illicitly, "under the counter".

All Party property consists of two parts – one legal, and the other, illegal, not registered in any deed of covenant.

Its legal property comprises Party premises, printshops, sanatoriums, hospitals. Recently, a report has been published on this property – enormous wealth of uncertain provenance.

Besides, there are other "top secret" undertakings, such as "special" production lines at meat packing plants where special sausage ("Regional Party Committee sort," as the workers of those plants call it) is made; there are also such things as "Regional Party Committee" milk and sweets... The Party has created a material world of its own, put itself apart from Soviet reality; this is a luxury world by our shabby standards, an oasis in our desert of stark poverty, a world of the privileged few who differ from the rest of us in what they eat and drink, in the way they travel by rail and air, in the kind of treatment they are offered in their holiday homes and hospitals, and even in how and where they are buried. One can get a visa to Paris or Brussels, but this Wonderland is closed to tourists, they do not like eye-witnesses there; it is guarded more carefully than the state frontiers are. Most people do not even suspect that such a world exists; it is not found on geographical maps, and beyond the astronomers' reach.



However, Party property is only a fraction of what the Party actually owns. It is being argued over, demands are made that it be given back to the people, but the Party is not going to relinquish it; on the contrary, the Party is prepared to use tanks to protect its property with.

The bulk of the Party's enormous property is everything found in this country, all the industry, all transport, all the collective farms and state farms, all the institutions of culture – practically everything on one-sixth of the planet including us, the population. It is precisely the CPSU Central Committee that appoints all the chiefs – economic and "elected", as well as the Party ones, as Ligachev testifies in his memoirs. Every Minister is accountable to the relevant Department Head of the Central Committee. Known only to a limited circle by name, this CC Department Head wields unlimited power. What does the name of Yevgeny Kozhevnikov, for instance, mean to you, my reader? No one has ever heard of him, although this man has long been in control of ministers of education and of the entire school system for that matter. It was him who has tormented and warped it, who, along with his accomplices, has made it hateful to children. Should he sue me, however, I shall not be able to make out my case because there is no evidence to support it. Everywhere has been done illicitly. By telephone. The telephone law applies not only to courts of law.

This is true of every department of our life. The Party is in control of everything, there is nothing above it, it is the full and absolute owner of everything. All the important economic resolutions have been published under the headings of "At the CPSU Central Committee and the Council of Ministers of the USSR", all the assignments were

set to the "Party-economic activists of the Party" – and who is the manager of every industrial plant, however big, afraid of most? Of the Regional Party Committee. Who does every collective farm chairman tremble at? At the Regional Party Committee. Enormous sums have been remitted and spent on the mysterious "instructions of the executive bodies". "Executive bodies or instances" are the underground nicknames of the Party. Underground Party Committees are still at work. The Regional Commttees distribute all the lucrative posts in every region, they are in control of the police and state security agencies. They enjoy the full power of control over the entire property in the given region. Our country is a multiple monarchy: every region is an appanage principality, and the Party Committee is king there. The Regional Party Committee has a free hand, i.e. it is free to rob its region and to lay its hands on almost all of its products. As a result, the Centre gets enormous resources and holds the reins of everything and everyone.

The only owner of our country is not the nation, not the state, not society but the huge Party corporation fit for the Guinness Book of Records.

WHAT'S GOING ON? They say that now it's different, that now the Central Committee endorses only the candidatures for top executive posts. They say that the Regional and District Commttees are losing their power. The correlations between the legal and the illegal has always been changing, but essentially the situation remains the same. We are the party of legality and order," says Polozkov, "which, as we see it, are the only guarantees of stabilizing the state". The only guarantees. But what is meant by "legality" and "order"? The "legality" by which the Party holds an undivided sway, and the "order" by which everythintg is subordinated to the Party. A legal preservation of illegal oppression.

We have got accustomed to slogans being directly opposite to what's actually taking place. As all the freedoms and human rights were suppressed, as prisons and concentration camps were being filled up, it was announced that the building of socialist society was in progress. As the military-industrial complex gradually gained in strength and took hold of a half of our industry, there came up the slogan of "Everything for the sake of man, everything for the benefit of man". As the state is being broken apart and whole republics are being antagonized to it, there comes up the slogan of statehood. And now it turns out that he who is against the Party oppression is against the state. They have crushed the state, humiliated it, and proclaim themselves to be all but the only protectors of statehood. A standard of image of a pseudodemocrat has been created: that of a secret accomplice of the shadow economy and foreign secret services who, in a bid to attain his political ambitions, seeks to take over power in order to disintegrate our state, to turn it into a raw materials appendage of capitalism, to cause social stratification and unemployment.

WHAT IS IT – THE PARTY? The Party membership amounts to 16 million, and if you tell anyone of them that he is the owner of everything, he will laugh in your face.

The Orwellian division of the Party into two – one mass and the other exclusive – has become a cliche in our political journalism. The Russian word "apparatchik" has found its way into the vocabularies of many languages. The "apparatchiks" are the bad guys who run the country on the Party's behalf.

This is as much true as it is untrue. There does exist a stratum of specially selected and trained Party officials who bear personal responsibility for whatever is being done on behalf of the Party. But this "apparat", operating on the borderline between the legal and the illegal, cannot, by its very nature, exist without the millions-strong Party which, by its votes and its votelessness, buttresses up the upper structures, fosters them materially and morally, protects them from the people's wrath and lends them the semblance of popularity and legality. By joining the Party, one gets not only a chance to carve out a career, this is not the most important thing – not everyone becomes the boss. The chief advantage is the sense of exclusiveness, protection, of being party to the supreme power. A Party membership card is a certificate of being first-rate, it enhances one's social status even if one remains an ordinary worker. Party property is based on illicit ownership which Party advantages to all are based upon, the upper crust has the special rations, the grassroots have the sense of special dignity.

...I have just opened a fresh newspaper. I read in it that the Prominform interstate association has been set up in Perm. It has been backed by Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. That's normal. Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers (the former one) has endorsed it, which is also normal. However, the list of the three influential persons without whom the whole thing would have been unthinkable is topped by Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. Which means that everything is as it has always been, "business as usual". The boss, the CPSU, comes first. The result? "The Region's timber output has diminished, tree rot has set in".

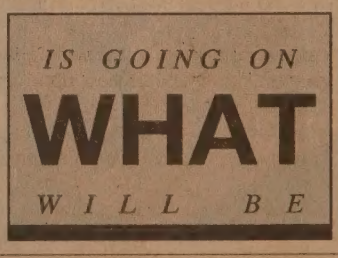
I have just received the latest copy of the *Kommunist*. Shakhnazarov, an insider, writes: "Although the decorum of the state remains, actually all the management has been done in circumvention of it from the very beginning. The Party has assumed control of the army and all the other sections of the state, it has actually become what is commonly known as the state".

Do you imagine what is meant by "all the other sections of the management?" These mean all of us, all of our crushed and stifled lives.

One can often hear that before the revolution Russia had fed a half of the world, and that after the revolution Russia landed up as a grain importer. This is also an inaccuracy. The Bolsheviks inherited not a newly-rich country but economic dislocation, rationing, surplus expropriation units, food crisis, cigarette lines, a country which nobody could govern. The four successive governments proved unable to stop the process of economic ruination. The people rebelled throughout the country and handed economic control over to the Bolsheviks. However, the manager has usurped somebody else's – the people's – property and has been robbing it for over the past seventy years now.

WHAT'S GOING ON? Why doesn't anyone say straight that all property in our country belongs to the Party? Why all the euphemisms like "the system", "the administrative system", "the totalitarian system"? Why aren't college sltudents told who the real property owner is? For censorship reasons only, which are still overwhelming us?

No, things are much more complicated than that. The whole secret is that besides the political camouflage ("Property of the entire people") there is also the economic veil. The French motor works Renault is state property. Any of our own motor works is also formally state property – but it is dominated by a hierarchy of economic structures all the way up to the Ministry which, in turn, has a "layer cake" of Party structures above it, topped by the Central Committee. There are so many of these "layers" that the



limits of ownership are washed out and the plant "ceases to be economical", as economists put it. Therefore, the question of who it belongs to and whose property it is makes no sense, strictly speaking. Property is an economic notion while the motor works under consideration has nothing to do with the economy, it is part of the administrative structure and therefore its real owner, the Party, can manage it uncontrollably and cash in on it. If the state could sell the plant to private individuals, like the French Republic can sell the Renault, the Party would have gained nothing from it.

It is precisely because our economy is grandly mismanaged that enormous material resources are wasted as if burned in incinerators. The greater the Party's interference, the further from the economy, the worse the mess and the losses it causes. But as soon as the Party gives up its managerial functions, the mess gets worse still. Such are the consequences of all this chimerical arrangement.

The vagueness of ownership rests on the vagueness of economic existence. As soon as washed-out ownership thickens and gathers economic body, i.e. acquires a real owner, it will be lost to the Party. We are trying to put that day off for as long as we can...

This is what is happening in our dear country: the Party has become a collective owner, a collective bourgeois. And the bourgeois always has one enemy: another bourgeois. A new class eagerly reaching for property, a new property owner.

A NEW PROPERTY OWNER. It would be so easy to write, following the official propagandists, that a new property owner – the working man – is coming, that now work collectives are free to choose the form of ownership, that to own a dozen of shares means to be an owner interested in performing well... Hurray! We are moving towards the free-market economy.

But this is a lie. This is a new ruse – let us transfer all the rights to the work collective... The Party Committee is right next door, and everything will come full circle. This is the case in the rest of the world: when a corporation faces bankruptcy, it usually sets up front companies in order to save its capital.

A worker will never come to own an open-hearth furnace, he simply cannot afford it, and no collective owner will ever start a modern enterprise unless there is competition with private entrepreneurs.

As it happens in all revolutions, a new property owner looks most unprepossessing. The present owners are decent looking, their rights are enshrined in the law and hallowed by the great idea of socialism, – and what about the new ones? Who are they? Total strangers, interlopers, shady operators... What are they doing here?

The newcomers are unscrupulous, ill-mannered and cynical businessmen. They are smart go-getters, they can start from scratch, they are bread-winners, they know all about money-making; these despicable newly-rich add to national wealth and create new jobs.

All of us are being scared by unemployment. One of our top statesmen tongue-lashes his No.1 enemy on television.

"Let him tell us straight that he wants unemployment!"

The current level of unemployment here is not five or even fifteen percent, as is the case in other countries – it amounts to at least 40 or 50 percent because the number of adequately paid jobs is infinitesimal, and people work on terms no self-respecting worker in the rest of the world would accept.

Recently a businessman was said to have invited Soviet workers to work in Los Angeles. He warned, however that the terms of the proposed contract were most unfavourable (by US standards). So what? Nearly one million applications were filed during a short period of time.

Million!

Doubtless, there is unemployment in Los Angeles, too. But why do people rush there? They say: "Are you sure that the workers want their government to change?" Here is the vote, the referendum: one million in response to the first call. This is precisely the choice in the nascent revolution: the workers are voting and fighting, like the miners, for the government that guarantees high pay and a better life for those who work well.

DEMOCRATS. What are the democrats, under any name, going to gain from this revolution?

Just nothing. Someone will find himself in power, someone will become a deputy, but such lucky ones will constitute only a small minority. The hundreds of thousands of people taking to the streets today will get nothing in the same way as the underground revolutionaries who had prepared the October Revolution didn't get anything.

Nothing but the sense of freedom and emancipation, nothing but newly-found human dignity, nothing but the awareness that you uphold the truth or, at least, oppose falsehood, nothing but the awareness that thanks to your voice and your efforts the country will find a way out of the blind alley.

AND NOW, THE MOST DIFFICULT QUESTION: on whose side is the first President of our country, the world's most controversial figure regarded by some as "the man of the year" and "the man of the decade" and by others as the "ruiner of the country".

Here he is facing us on our TV screens, and anyone who has some life experience can judge him by his words, his deeds and by the overall impression he produces.

Is he against democracy? Does he want the abnormal system of ownership reigning supreme today to last forever? Does he want the Party to own and rule all and sundry until the end of time?

Opinions differ on that score, but personally I don't think he does. I am trying to understand that man, and I realize the amount of responsibility he shoulders. If he emancipates factories and plants, all economic links will be disrupted, and the industry will stop functioning. If he gives all the land to the peasants – what if they do not cope? In the absence of the collective farms, this would spell famine. If he lets the industrial enterprises keep all the hard currency they earn, will the country be able to extricate itself from the tight foreign debt noose? If he demobs at least a quarter of the troops and orders an end to the manufacturing of superfluous weapons, who is going to provide jobs for the millions of people now employed by the munitions industry?

The future is yet to come, but the present demands our attention right now. As in any revolution, the present is hateful, and the outlook for the future is dim. How can one lead the nation to nowhere?

The democrats are putting pressure on Gorbachev, criticizing him and demanding his resignation. This is the role they have to play and the duty they have to discharge – the democrats are obliged to work for revolution. But what is the President to do? Many think he ought to resign his post as Party General Secretary. Resign? Leaving the Party as it now is uncontrolled? In that case, it will start forming, overnight, not only national salvation committees, but combat units and Party task forces, and unleash a civil war. If there is the civil war threat of all, it emanates from the Party only, because the Party alone has something to lose, possesses the weapons, and controls the army.

The President started perestroika, and the nation followed him. Now, as it usually happens, the nation is forging ahead, and perestroika is developing into a revolution. Will the President be able to head it? Or will the nation proceed without him? He is to choose between being with the nation or with those whom the nation hates. A choice like this has to be made without delay.

Otherwise the free-market economy will prove to be as much of a Chimera as communism has been.

Potatoes: our only hope?

The erasure of distinctions between town and countryside pending famine: Premier Pavlov's new concept

Having analyzed the political situation in the country long before the current talk about the free-market economy and imminent famine began, a friend of mine, a research worker, arrived at an unexpected conclusion: "We have to plant potatoes, plenty of potatoes. And dig out storages..." He was "booed off the platform." He was accused of narrow-mindedness, hoarding instincts and primitive pragmatism. You should be ashamed of yourself, we told him, talking about potatoes against the background of what is going on on our turbulent political scene...

Our irony was out of place. My friend inherited this "hoarding instincts" from his peasant forebears who had felt in their bones that they should stock up food to provide against the aftermath of political turmoils.

He did not raid foodstores with a haversack slung over his shoulders. He just planted potatoes on most of his garden plot formerly taken up by sweet but not too nourishing strawberries. Besides, he planted cucumbers and about 500 cabbages. And, to cap it all, he bought forty chickens!

As we sat by his red-hot stove recently, washing down ham and eggs (his hens had begun to lay) and sauerkraut with home-distilled currant brandy, we recalled our ironic remarks made early this spring and our high-falutin' phrases about the triumphant onmarch of democracy in the country. On the television screen, someone was holding forth about the ways to provide enough food for the nation. Our "learned" host pointed a horny finger at him and said: "Look, this guy's gonna feed me to my heart's content!" and crunched a cucumber of his own pickling.

Why am I telling you all this? What's the big idea? The free-market economy, of course. Now we are changing over, in words at least, from the planned socialist economy to a free-market one. All this changeover amounts to is talk about the free market. So far, so good, but the trouble is that no one explains to us what the free market is all about.

Our nation, in its frenzied search for something to eat, takes the word "free market" as a "marketplace," not a Tashkent marketplace where water melon is still 10 kopecks a kilo, but a Moscow marketplace where we all know what price water melon is. What else can the word "free market" mean to us considering our former Prime Minister Ryzhkov's statement that the changeover to it meant an automatic rise in prices for bread and "other food products"?

It makes no difference that the Supreme Soviet, upon recovering from the initial shock, levelled devastating criticism at such a "changeover." Neither does it make any difference that our most prominent economists explained to the people, in countless interviews, that this, by definition, is an impossibility. The nation did not heed them any longer because it was too busy hoarding up food to watch television. And it identified the free market with an obligatory rise in prices. A global rise, that is...

I wonder whether our government knows anything about the nation it is trying to govern? Becuase statements like that can be made either out of ignorance of the situation in the country, or, God forbid, on purpose, in order to complicate matters. It is hard to imagine a cataclysm capable of aggravating the economic, social (and, incidentally, political) situation in the country to the extent the single statement did by the Prime Minister whose mission seems to be to keep this situation stable.

Much happened thereafter. Neo-Bolsheviks opposed the free market head-on, orthodox Marxists said they'd rather die than allow the country go capitalist, Professor Sergeyev told the Russian constituent Party Congress that even capitalist countries had shown signs of changing over to a "planned economy."

In the meantime, the friend of mine took some time off his research work to earth up his potatoes, to water his cucumbers and to feed his chickens...

Today his sarcastic remaks about the empty "feed the nation" talk are understandable. Frankly, he cares nothing for this talk. He has lived through the winter, expected to be "lean," comfortably, with only himself to depend on for food. He had produced all the food he needed on his own. There was even some to spare – he cannot really consume twenty sacks of potatoes. Now it is hard to tell how much it will be by early summer, so why not cater to the needs of those who have no garden plots?

To paraphrase the well-known phrase, "Let the starved take care of the starved." If everyone of us could only be more efficient on his garden plot... Vasily Selyunin, a free-market man, has long been growing potatoes as an example for others to imitate. Another free-market supporter, Gavriil Popov, has been giving out garden plots to Muscovites for some time now to plant potatoes on. Still another free-market man, Nikolai Shmelyov, called upon all to solve our own food problem by growing self-same potatoes.

What has the free-market economy to do with all this, the reader may ask. The author calls for the natural economy, and that's that!

In making propaganda for the market, we seem to be all mixed up. Ryzhkov and Pavlov insisted on an inevitable rise in price as if anyone can tell today (however hard the Price Committee may try) what ten eggs or a TV set are really worth. Because, even if we take into account the expenditures on poultry and cattle feed, on electric power supply, on hen-coop construction – we shall have to go not by free market prices but by those cast-iron ones set by the officials of the State Committee on Prices and the Ministry of Finance. And such is the case all along the line – from iron ore extraction to flat-iron making, from a wheat-ear to a pastry... It's no use trying to fertilize an iron carcass – it should be left to rot, and a a new shoot of market-free economy should be planted next to it. This shoot should be taken good care of, fostered with tax benefits and state investments but by no means dressed with ideological "fertilizers."

No one believes in the fairy tale about the market with prices set from above. It should be made clear, in the first place, what's the price of what. This can be found out only given freedom of prices and, the

Premier Pavlov: If you want to eat, grow your own food

chief thing, the freedom of production. This is where everything begins – from the freedom of production relations, from free enterprise which is incompatible with the iron hand of any Ministry or with the President's decrees. When something is taboo, the rest is permitted. Even if prices rise, a man who is paid according to his work will survive somehow. Although, let us face it, we are up against more difficulties than successes – the record of Poland is a case in point.

My chicken-breeding friend took the market situation into account. He might well have planted baobabs on his garden plot if they were in demand. What I must say for him is that he was a man of genius – he had predicted the mysterious disappearance from the market of eggs (and chickens, incidentally). A look at his hands will show that he can take care of his family and knows how to grow potatoes.

Am I saying that come on city dwellers, take up farming? Let us put a united front against imminent famine?

Come to think of it, why should we? Why should a person eager to make a swimming pool and to grow roses in his garden be compelled to set up a hen-hoop and to plant cabbage and potatoes instead? Not out of love for the kitchen flora, of course. Just out of fear of famine. Each should do what he can. But what can a surgeon do if his hands are trembling after a weekend of manuring his garden plot? Not for distraction, but as a means of subsistence?

The people need not be fed by the deputies or the state. All the people want is free hand. They want more benefits and less of those in high places. The people can feed themselves on their own. No market or marketplace can scare those who know that their well-being depends on neither political wrangling nor the zigzags of state economic thought.

In his television address, Valentin Pavlov made public a new agricultural policy of the government: if you want to eat, grow your own food.

If such is the view our government takes of the division of labour then why doesn't it distribute the state farm lands among the public so that city dwellers could plough and sow along with the peasants? If the head of the government thinks that the city dwellers have unduly distanced themselves from field work, well, let each of us be his own shoemaker, baker and his own Prime Minister. Does the answer lie in that?

Incidentally, the United States depends on just three percent of its population for its grain supply. Which, incidentally, has a lot to spare for us, too. But, judging by everything, we are still going our own way...

Ivan Yelistratov

PUBLIC OPINION

Communism: pros and cons

About a half of the country's population thinks that the ideas of communism have exhausted themselves. This has been revealed by the public opinion poll conducted in the Russian Federation, in the Ukraine, in Kazakhstan and Estonia by the All-Union Social-Economic Public Opinion Research Centre.

Sixty percent of men and 44 percent of women (70 percent of the pollees aged under 20 and 40 percent of those aged over 60) have said goodbye to communism.

Every third college man and woman and every fifth of those having no college diploma is for communism. Does that mean that the less educated a person the easier it is for him to denounce communist convictions?

Among the CPSU members the number of those for and against communism has almost coincided (38 and 40 percent). To compare: out of every five members of new unofficial movements and organizations three deny the communist perspective.

The proportion of NO votes is the highest in Estonia: three fifths of the population, and in Kazakhstan – 55 percent. In the Russian Federation and in the Ukraine, there has turned out to be no more than a half of the population opposed to communism.

Moscow, with 27 percent of its population remaining true to its former idol, has not proved the most communist city of all. In this respect it has been outdone by small towns which, incidentally, have outnumbered the countryside by almost a half (37 percent agaisnt 19).

Today the number of those who deny communism is about twice as much as that of the diehard communists. But between the supporters and opponents of communism there is a sizeable part of the public which waits and sees, unable to join either the one side or the other. At any moment it can revert to former ideals. In that case, the balance of forces will be about equal – 50 to 50.

Vera Nikitina and Vadim Sazonov

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USSR – US

Halfway – to where?

The results of James Baker's visit to Moscow do not promise new breakthroughs in Soviet-American relations

It seems that Washington has come to the firm conclusion that it must reassess its policy of constructivecooperation with the Soviet Union which it has adhered to the past year and a half. Why did this change in policy come about and where are Washington and Moscow headed in their relationship, forward or backward?

A tormenting refusal

Upon taking office, the Bush administration devoted a considerable effort to formulating a new policy as regards the Soviet Union. However, it did not just sit back idly and bide its time.

Doubts were expressed all over Washington. Fears were voiced that perestroika was nothing more than a new mask donned by the old regime and that any changes implemented would not be lasting. There were doubts that declarations in the style of new thinking hid a determination to reassess approaches of the cold war era and if those who held such doubts recognized the depth of changes which had occurred in Soviet foreign policy, they nonetheless were sceptical about the Soviet leadership's ability to make the tough choices that were needed in its dealings with Eastern Europe.

Of significance was the intriguing announcement by President Bush of May 1989 of the intention of the United States to "move away from its policy of containment."

A new period of Soviet-American relations was finally ushered in after the meeting of the two presidents on Malta in December of that year, a meeting which served a political precursor to the great changes in the face of Central Europe. At that time Soviet-American relations were given a boost by the new Soviet stance on changes in Eastern Europe. Here it was Moscow which had to make the difficult choices as the renouncement of the Brezhnev Doctrine inevitably led to a host of geopolitical changes which would require a complete rethinking of decades of what seemed to be unshakable methods and means of safeguarding the secuirty interests of the Soviet Union as well as the very concept of security itself. The role and place of the Soviet Union in the system of world politics were altered completely.

One of the main factors in the calculations of the Soviet leadership was quite naturally the position of the US. To what extent would Washington be willing to move away from its zero-sum mentality? Would the United States use the new situation to extend the perimetre of its containment to the very borders of the Soviet Union and thus increase several-fold the military pressure it bore on the Soviet Union? And even if the US gave guarantees on this issue, would they not turn out later to be mere broken promises?

In those months as at no other time, the question of trust became one of crucial significance. And in this respect the Malta Summit proved to be a real turning point.

Of special significance became the setting up of close working relationship between the two presidents who both came away with a feeling of confidence in the ability to trust one another in that complex period in Soviet-American relations which were full of unprecedented possibilities and fraught with unpredictable dangers. Both leaders realized that even in light of the existence of the necessary objectiive prerequites for an improvement in the two countries relations, such possibilities could become realities only if they were to work hard together towards that common goal.

The development of the Soviet-American relationship over the course of the following year lived up to the expectations which arose after the Malta Summit. The Soviet Union and the US followed parallel courses in overcoming the split in Europe and, however complex the problems facing Moscow with the unification of Germany and the breakup of the Warsaw Pact, were there is no one in his right mind who would lay the blame for this on Washington. Moscow had to go an extra mile (and probably not just one) in signing the agreement on the reduction of conventional arms in Europe which can be explained not so much by American insistence – although the United States acted very firmly – as by the unavoidability of asymetrical reductions due to the withdrawal of troops from Eastern Europe and the resulting reduction in the military balance by our side. The productive summit in Washington and regular contacts on the foreign ministerial level gave us hope that the changes that were to take place would be permanent and would continue to develop in the future. In the past few months this confidence had been somewhat shaken.

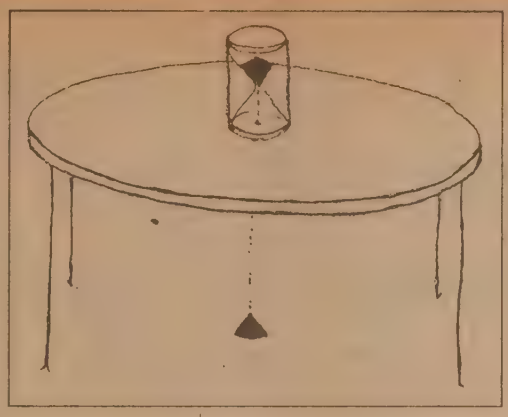
What next?

Up until the end of last year, Washington generated its policies based on the supposition that the changes taking place inside the Soviet Union were irreversible, although several members of the adminsitration were reticent to admit to such a position. The administration began to feel that George Kennan's prediction in 1947 of the weakening in the Soviet might had come about and that allowed Washington to rethink its containment stance which had been in force for decades.

In Washington, clearly people came to the conclusion that the more ambitious goal of containment – the "complete destruction of Soviet might" – did not serve the national interests of the United States as the disintegration of the Soviet Union could lead to a global destabilization which would result in the rising up of the Soviet Union as a threat as in the days of the cold war. American planners preferred to see the course of events inside the Soviet Union proceed towards a further weakening of the Soviet Union and its internal reorganization continue in order for it to, on the one hand, remain a whole and reasonably healthy state while, on the other hand to reduce to a minimum the threat it could pose to American interests.

However, nowadays there are persistent doubts in Washington that the development of events in the Soviet Union is proceeding along the former lines.

Naturally, the situation inside the Soviet Union is not so one-sided as it often appears to the pundits in Washington. Any objections on this score do not change the fact that the current state of affairs in the Soviet Union is viewed from the other side of the Atlantic in the most pessimistic colours. Washington is once again getting ready to bide its time. But if two years ago, changes for the better were the expectation of the day, now the opposite is the case.



Drawing by Alexander Mitnik

Again Washington is reassessing for itself the events in the Soviet Union, a reassessment which could serve as the basis for a new administration policy. The first signals have already been given: the CIA has virtually gone back on its assessment of last year that the changes in the Soviet Union were irreversible and now considers that a movement backward is in the making. Against this bleak backdrop, the former sympathy of Americans for the Soviet Union and the efforts of its leadership is waning while ever louder and louder shouts are heard of "We told you so!" from those who were always against any letup of pressure on the Soviet Union. In these circumstances, the opinion of a part of the administration could become the opinion of the administration as a whole – that is if it is sanctioned by the president.

A question of trust

Recent events in the Soviet Union are not the only thing cited by those who call for a reassessment of Soviet-American relations. Problems have arose in the key sphere of arms limitations and reductions and complications have arose in the course of the Gulf conflict.

The ratification of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is now under threat of not coming off as the United States, and indeed the West in general, regard the transfer of Soviet weaponry to the east of the Urals as a violation of the agreement and, more importantly, the rapid transfer of three army divisions to the coast guard which does not come under the terms of the treaty.

Now at question is whether the trust that over years of hard efforts was established between the Soviet Union and its partners abroad is to be lost, something that could lead to a severe worsening in relations between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world.

Many in Washington are convinced, or at least claim to be convinced, that the Soviet Union in attempting to put an end to the conflict in the Persian Gulf by peaceful means went too far in appeasing Iraq to the detriment of the interests of the United States. A whole host of accusations have been hurled at the Soviet Union from reproaches of tactical miscalculations on its part to absurd accusations that, in putting forth its peace initiative, Moscow tried to provoke the United States into taking hasty military action before it was ready to do so.

It should be said that the pressure of the right during the conflict did not have a great effect on the Bush administration: it controls too well the centre of the political spectrum and it racked up numerous points in its favour by its spectacular successes in the desert war. The American leadership prefer to stress the positive side of Soviet-American cooperation during the crisis, stressing the importance of the Soviet Union's support of the UN resolutions, to recognize the efficacy of the Soviet Union's peace-making initiatives and the necessity of its taking part in the formation of a post-war system of security in the region. This was the general tone of the speeches given by Secretary of State Baker in his tour of Middle Eastern capitals following which he continued discussions of a whole complex of problems connected with the post-war situation after his arrival in Moscow.

The Middle East was one of the main regions where the US policy of containment of the USSR came into force. Thus a reassessment, even if only partial, of this approach can be viewed as a confirmation not in word but also in deed of the intention of the Bush administration to go beyond containment. Of course, many things remain to be seen and it is not yet clear to what degree the Americans will be willing to take into account Soviet interests in this region bordering on the Soviet Union.

The Bush administration is not hurrying however to move completely away from the policy of containment in several other areas of Soviet-American relations, most notably in the sphere of arms limitations and reductions.

It appears that American stubbornness in the situation which has evolved in relation to the CFE is connected not only with real complications but also with a reduction in interest of the United States in seeing this treaty ratified, given the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe which is already impossible for the Soviet Union to halt. Washington evidently has decided to go for broke in finding a favourable solution to the remaining points of contention in negotiations on offensive nuclear weapons, openly bogging them down in the problems connected with the CFE and not beeing afraid of the danger of their being dragged out and another summit being postponed. In this situation, Soviet-American relations might fail to be given a new stimulus which in the past years has come out of summits and might fail to further improve. And although the visit of the American Secretary of State did produce results, it came far from turning out to be a promise of a new breakthrough in mutual relations. Therefore even if the tactic of bidding one's time is not once again resorted to by the administration, we could nonetheless wind up with such a de facto situation on our hands.

In whose interests would this be? Hardly in ours: we have not become any less interested in a reduction of the military balance nor in political cooperation with the United States in regions of key strategic importance nor even more importantly in the establishment of good trade and economic ties – in a word, in multifaceted cooperation with a superpower which came out of the cold war with far fewer losses than we. Nor is this likely to be in the interests of the United States. In this period, in which the Soviet Union is going through a crisis of such proportions that situations which existed a mere two years ago seem to be the paragon of stability, Baker's old words that sitting idly by and watching will not be of benefit to the United States in the least appear to be justified.

Our foreign ministers have met. Will the presidents now make the final decision?

Igor Malashenko

Hussein is defeated but not overthrown

Who will challenge the dictator?

Opposition to the Baghdad regime existed even before the allies began military operations against Iraq, but it was never taken seriously. Only the easy war in the Gulf impelled the world community to notice the anti-Saddam forces.

Right after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2 of last year, the allies started working out three schemes: the physical removal of the Iraqi ruler, a palace coup engineered by officials close to Hussein, and the overthrow of the regime by the anti-Saddam opposition.

Thanks to space technology, the Americans knew the movements of Hussein. At a meeting between Baker and Aziz in Geneva last January, that is, on the eve of military operations, American diplomats presented the Iraqi foreign minister with a videocassette. The pictures taken from space showed the movements of Saddam Hussein during one day.

Having received this present, Saddam took fantastic precautions. He moved only from one bunker to another and compelled his nephew to taste his food to see that it was not poisoned.

However, the allies quickly gave up any plans of assassination. A violent death would automatically make a martyr of Hussein in the eyes of the Arabs and could have split the anti-Iraqi coalition.

On closer examination, plans for a palace coup proved to be unrealistic. The dictator physically eliminated nearly all more or less authoritative officials in his entourage on whom the allies could count. According to Karim, a former bodyguard of the dictator, fear compelled the Iraqi leader to look for "enemies" almost every day.

"Once," Karim recalls, "Saddam Hussein looked into the eyes of Sabakh Mirza, one of his favourite bodyguards, and said: 'Sabakh, you seem to have changed, and your face has changed too.' And that man has disappeared forever."

Nevertheless, the possibility of assassination should not be ruled out entirely. According to unconfirmed reports, Takha Yassin Ramadan, deputy prime minister and a close aide, recently tried to shoot the President but was killed by the President's bodyguard on the spot.

In the final count, the allies decided that it would be more realistic to count on opposition emigrants. They began to put forth feelers to try to establish secret contacts.

The main figures of the opposition

Before the liberation of Kuwait, any talk about a possible victory of a united Iraqi opposition did not seem serious. The opposition consists of motley groups ranging from Islamic fundamentalists to Communists, from Kurdish rebels to former members of the ruling Baath party. Broadly speaking, the Iraqi opposition can be divided into three camps: small secular parties, Shiite Moslems controlled by Teheran, and the Kurdish rebel movement. They are united by a common goal – the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

At present the West pins its hopes mainly on the emigrant secular opposition. About a million exiles have taken refuge in Syria, Egypt, Britain and France. The most authoritative figures among them are General Hassan al-Nakib, former commander of Iraqi forces in Jordan; General Ibrahim al-Daud, former defence minister and commander of the republican guards who brought Saddam and the Baath party to power as a result of a coup in 1968; General Abdel Bani Khraui, a member of the conspiracy against Saddam in 1970; Saad Jabre, a well-off businessman in London and son of the former Iraqi prime minister who led the government before the revolution of 1958, when the monarchy was deposed in Iraq. The secular opposition includes Communists, who have always fought against both Baathists and Shiite mullahs.

The secular groups are backed by Syria and modern Arab states in the Persian Gulf. Shortly after the war the Saudi government invited Jabre and three former generals to Riyad by sending a special plane to Damascus. By all indications, talks were held on the question of forming a government in exile. Simultaneously, London also maintained contacts with the four. On returning to Britain, Jabre set up a Council of Free Iraq.

The programme of this organization has several points: prevention of the country's break-up with its unpredictable consequences, a just settlement of the Kurdish problem, democratization of public life, and the holding of free elections. At the same time, Saudi Arabia, being an authoritarian Sunnite state, seeks to install a government prepared to cooperate and not concerned about democratic ideas. On the other hand, Riyad is not enthusiastic about the prospect of Iraq becoming a "fundamentalist Iran."

As distinct from secular opponents, Shiites fight against Hussein within the country, all the more so as they comprise over half its population. Their discontent with the existing regime can easily be understood. The high posts in the army, police and the ruling party are held only by Sunnites. For many years of Saddam's rule, Shiites have been subjected to both legal and religious discrimination. The war in the Gulf stirred up the adherents of Ayatollah Khomeini and led to a broad anti-Saddam uprising. As leaders of the Shiite opposition say, "their day has come."

After the victory of the coalition, the uprising against the Hussein regime, prepared by pro-Iran fundamentalist groups, began precisely in the areas of Kerbela and Nejef, where the mausoleums of Hussein and Ali, the third and first imams of this Islamic trend are situated, and also in Basra, mainly a Shiite city. The leaders of the uprising – Sayed Hazi al Modarreci, Mohammad Bakr Khakim and Mohammad al-Malik – have always come out against the secular military bureaucratic state founded by Saddam Hussein and have maintained close ties with religious circles in Iran.

In a secret memorandum of March 4, 1991, the "guardians of the Islamic revolution" were ordered for the first time to give every possible support to Shiite dissidents. Iranian leaders are trying to achieve what President Bush greatly fears. They want to destabilize a defeated Iraq and take its place as the most powerful state in the Persian Gulf.

Iraqi opposition forces meet in Beirut – from Islamic fundamentalists to Kurdish rebels

AP-TASS telephoto

The leaders of the Shiite community in Iraq, just as their spiritual leaders in Teheran, adhere to tough anti-American and anti-Western views. "We fight against the United States and Saddam, defending the Iraqi land," Mohammad Bakr Khakim says. "If a pro-American government comes to power in Bagdad, we shall fight against it. Our goal is to establish a system which would respect Islamic laws and the independence and territorial integrity of Iraq."

It is clear that such a programme of the Iraqi fundamentalists can hardly inspire the US administration. Washington still remembers well the Ayatollah. The defeated but not overthrown Hussein seems to be a lesser evil for the United States than any alternative composed of Shiite leaders. This is one of the reasons why Americans are sitting back and idly watching the clash between republican guards and the Shiite opposition, without supplying the latter even with captured arms.

The leaders of the Kurdish movement (Sunnite Kurds constitute about 20 percent of Iraq's population) are less bellicose towards the United States. They have their own accounts to settle with Saddam Hussein. The Kurds are well armed and trained in warfare and are united. Jalal al-Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Front of Kurdistan, which has been waging an armed struggle against Bagdad's dictator for many years, formulated the aims of the Kurdish movement in this way: "We Kurds do not want to have an independent state. We watch the tragic history of the Palestinians and do not want to share their fate. Our aim is to gain broad autonomy in united Iraq."

Document not followed by action

A total of 325 leaders and representatives of 23 groups fighting for the overthrow of the Hussein regime gathered in Beirut on March 11. Their principal aim was to coordinate the efforts of Iraqi opposition forces in the struggle against Saddam Hussein and to form a government in exile. But the good intentions and common hatred of all participants for the ruler in Bagdad did not help to achieve the tasks set by them. The three-day conference of Iraqi opposition forces adopted a document, a sort of programme of action of the opposition for the next few years. In particular, it envisages the founding of a national salvation committee, the establishment of a fund to help the rebels, and international contacts for strengthening solidarity with the Iraqi people's struggle against the Hussein regime.

However, a government in exile was not formed. Shiites from the south could not reach agreement with Sunnite Kurds from the north, and Communists did not find a common language with liberals from London. Apart from anti-Saddam rhetoric, larded with virulent attacks against the United States, the West and most of all Israel, the participants in the Beirut conference were unable to achieve anything concrete and left virtually empty-handed.

Though the rebel Kurds and Shiites control up to 40 percent of Iraqi territory according to some estimates, the disunity of the anti-Saddam forces makes it easier for the dictator to crush the opposition forces one by one, all the more so as the army, especially its elite units, remain loyal to Bagdad.

Will Saddam Hussein be overthrown? A mere desire of the opposition to do so is not enough. By all appearances, the West is shuffling the cards. The positions held by different parties are subject to change. Paradoxically enough, the Americans, who retain about 15 percent of Iraqi territory, do not have a group on which they could rely within Iraq itself. The secular opposition does not enjoy broad support among the population and does not have any armed units. Besides this, the liberals are hostile towards the United States no less than their opponents, that is, the present regime. Is it possible to count on Shiites? It would be folly to do that by Washington because the Shiite opposition groups are fully controlled by Teheran, which has had bad relations with the United States for many years. Support for Kurds could arouse discontent among some partners of the anti-Saddam coalition, especially Turkey. So it remains for the US to keep Hussein in power – an extremely unpleasant prospect for the United States in a moral sense.

What about Moscow? What suits it more from the standpoint of political pragmatism: the keeping of Hussein in power or the coming of pro-Iran fundamentalists to power? It can be supposed that the interests of the Soviet Union and the United States do not differ very much. True, a third, though non-existent variant would suit both Moscow and Washington.

Yakov Borovoi,
Alexander Chudodeyev

An agreement is an agreement

The unification of Germany could not be avoided. Soviet diplomacy simply recognized European realities

Yuli KVITSINSKY, Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR, answers the questions put by *New Times*

New Times. What guarantees do we have that Germany will carry out its commitments? Could it not happen that the Moscow Treaty suffers the fate of the Versailles Treaty?

Yuli Kvitsinsky. I believe there are no reasons to fear such a development. The Treaty on the final settlement regarding Germany was worked out according to entirely different principles than those on which the Versailles Treaty of 1919 was based. The treaties have little in common. It should be recalled that the Versailles Treaty was drawn up without the participation of Germany, immediately following Germany's defeat in World War I. Its spokesmen were admitted to the Paris peace conference only towards its end. The Germans were simply given the final text of the Treaty to sign. Therefore, the Versailles Treaty was regarded, in its form and essence, as having been forced on them, from outside and not meeting the interests of the German people.

Everything was fundamentally different with the Moscow Treaty. From the beginning, both German states participated, on an equal footing with the four powers and without any discrimination, in keeping with the "2+4" formula in the final settlement of the German question and in solving the problems left after the war which ended 45 years ago. The limitations, including those of military-political character, were assumed under the Treaty by united Germany of its own accord, realizing its responsibility for peace and tranquility in Europe. Herein lies one of the guarantees that the Moscow Treaty won't be subsequently reneged upon as was the Versailles Treaty.

There are also material guarantees for exercising reliable control over the observance of the commitments assumed by Germany. Thus, the fulfilment of the commitment on non-possession of weapons of mass destruction will be controlled by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), all the more so, as Germany confirms all its commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Control over the numerical strength of the German armed forces is established by means of a mechanism developed under the CFE Treaty. Non-deployment of foreign troops on the territory of the former GDR may be verified by the centre for the prevention of conflicts. In addition, the wide-scale inspection now allowed in Europe will prevent any covert military activity on even a small scale.

The main point is that today Europe differs significantly from the Europe of the Versailles era. A major military confrontation on the continent is becoming a thing of the past. The first steps towards the creation of new structures are being taken. United Germany will occupy in them its rightful place, on an equal footing with other states.

N.T. We occasionally hear that for renouncing its rights as a winning power, the Soviet Union allegedly received too little. How real were these rights? How did they correlate with the existence of two sovereign German states – the GDR and the FRG?

Y.K. To begin with, I would like to note that all the advantages obtained by the Soviet Union as a result of final settlement regarding Germany, and there are quite a few of them, it won as a result of complex searches for balanced solutions, which took into consideration the interests of all parties involved. Each of the states which took part in the negotiations of the "Six" had to concede something. The renunciation of rights and responsibilities is only a part of German settlement, although a rather substantial one which crowns this process. What's more, I want to stress that these rights were called quadripartite rights, i.e., they operated together with the rights of the other three powers and they were renounced by all the four victorious powers – not just the Soviet Union.

Under the Moscow Treaty, the Quadripartite

Agreement on West Berlin, which dates September 3, 1971, loses its force and all corresponding institutions of the four powers are to be disbanded. This decision affects first of all the garrisons of the three Western powers in West Berlin, which were financed by Germany and enjoyed in the city the prerogatives of supreme power. For quite some time we have had no such prerogatives in the GDR.

Now a few words about how real the rights renounced by the USSR were. It is no longer 1945 and a great deal has changed since then. Two German states have existed on German soil for more than 40 years. We always pursued a policy in favour of the transfer of as many rights as possible to the East German government, and to its lawful representatives, since it strengthened the republic's sovereignty and enhanced its international prestige. As for the special rights of the three powers in the FRG, they have systematically and for many years been acquiring a different basis by concluding new agreements between the three powers and the FRG. These are fixed-date agreements and they may be renounced if the parties so desire.

In short, we are dealing here with different rights from those of early postwar years. We did not regard them as a fiction but, at the same time,

no one thought seriously that they could be in reality put into effect.

Since the three Western powers, having ratified the Treaty, have already fully renounced their rights, it would be illusory to think that the refusal to ratify the Moscow Treaty and other Soviet-German documents would enable us to use in any form previous rights regarding Germany. And again we could rely only on force, thereby opposing oneself, as was the case during the cold war years, to the Western powers, other European states and Germany itself with all the ensuing negative consequences for peace and security in Europe.

It must not be forgotten either that for our balanced policy in the unification of Germany, based on the recognition of all realities, in addition to the resolutions of the Treaty on a German settlement highly important for the security of the USSR, we also earned the German people's gratitude which will bring enormous dividends in the future.

N.T. Is there any basis to conclude that the West German government "bought" from the USSR the right to a unified Germany?

Y.K. In this connection voices are sometimes heard in this country to the effect that we "sold out" the GDR, made unilateral concessions and ceded our positions. I positively disagree with this. We made no bargain with Bonn regarding the GDR. This would run counter to the elementary norms of ethics and international law. On the contrary, the Soviet Union consistently adhered to the principle of self-determination of nations and respect for the Germans' desire to unite. We were not the initiators of Germany's partition. At the 1945 Potsdam Conference it was the USSR that took the lead in proposing that Germany be regarded as a single whole. Even after the emergence of two German states, the Soviet government, together with the GDR, continued for a long period of time (practically into the late 1950s) to uphold the principle of German unity.

An entirely new situation began to be shaped in Central Europe from the autumn of 1989. The socio-political changes that took place in East European countries objectively created prerequisites for the process of German unification. The events in the GDR in November 1989, showed that the republic's population supported unification, and the earliest possible unification at that. This was reaffirmed as a result of elections to the People's Chamber on March 18, 1990.

Thus, we witnessed the expression of a people's will and this development could have been opposed only with force. We could not do this out of considerations of principle. Hence, we had to think about ensuring in this situation, to the best of our ability, the interests of the Soviet Union. That is what we did.

Having concluded the Treaty on the final settlement in Germany and a package of Soviet-German treaties and agreements, we reliably solved the problems involving our security, and embarked upon a new level of relations with united Germany, acquired a partner ready to render us moral, political and economic aid in this difficult period.

We were not paid a single pfennig for the unification of Germany. As a matter of fact, nobody is obliged to pay for the realization of his natural right to free choice. The billions of marks received by the USSR from the FRG are earmarked exclusively for the upkeep and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Germany and for their resettlement in the Soviet Union.

N.T. Why was no commitment achieved at the talks on the withdrawal of the troops of the three Western powers from the FRG in reply to the agreement on Soviet troop withdrawal?

Y.K. As we can see from experience, there are no ideal political solutions. One always has to forgo something realizing that what is longed for and what can really be achieved are two different things. As for the troops of the three Western powers in the FRG, first of all they include 250,000 American soldiers regarded in NATO not only as a material military force but also as a symbol of the inseparable security link between the US and Europe. Their withdrawal from Germany would signify the withdrawal of the US from Europe, which at this stage is unacceptable for the US, the FRG and many other West European countries.

Besides this it must be taken into account that if originally the basis of the stay of the troops of the four powers was the same, common for all – occupation of a defeated Nazi Germany, in due course it has changed. These troops remained in the GDR and the FRG on the basis of new agreements between the two German states and members of those miltiary alliances to which they belonged: the GDR with the Soviet Union and the FRG with the United States, Britain and France. The unification of Germany, which could not be halted, created a paradoxical situation in which Soviet troops found themselves on the territory of a NATO member in funda-

mentally different conditions than those for the troops of the three Western powers. The Germans themselves described precisely at the "2+4" talks the difference in their status: the difference is that "the troops of the Western powers are welcome in the FRG and they are asked to stay there." Perfectly clear.

The attempts to leave our troops in the former GDR a basis other than that which justifies their existence today would have resulted in the creation of an atmosphere of intolerance regarding them and would be fraught with serious conflicts. Financially too the upkeep of nearly 400,000 soldiers for hard currency would place an unbearable burden on us.

The withdrawal of our troops from Germany will be a practical contribution to the implementation of the aim declared by us: the withdrawal of all troops from these territories. There will be no Soviet troops in any other countries by 1995. The withdrawal of our troops from Germany will create conditions in which the Germans will be compelled to think: why should they, strictly speaking, have on their soil such large allied forces? Such sentiments will also be backed by further advance in building a European home and the creation of new security structures. The French, Belgians and the Dutch have already announced planned troop withdrawals from the FRG, the British too intend to cut by half their Army of the Rhine. The question of the substantial reduction of American troops will surely acquire a practical importance.

N.T. How is the problem concerning the transportation of our troops to be withdrawn from Germany being solved?

Y.K. Under an agreement with the FRG one billion marks have been allocated to meet these expenses. Some complications arose in connection with the stand taken by the government of the Republic of Poland. Poland raised the question of the withdrawal of our troops from Poland before the end of 1991, that is within an entirely unrealistic time limit, and unless this problem is solved it gives no permission for a transit across its territory of troops being withdrawn from Germany. Negotiations are now being conducted with Poland, and we hope that a reasonable approach and a mutually acceptable compromise will be found. But for the time being we had to set up a transit route by sea, bypassing Poland. The schedule of troop withdrawal and property transportation from Germany is in general being observed. Other versions of transit are being thought out in case Poland, in disregard of its own interests, shows stubbornness and continues, as previously, to inhibit our transit. We also believe that if the money allocated by the FRG proves to be insufficient, it will be possible to come to an agreement with the German side on this issue.

N.T. The Western media carry many items on negative phenomena in the group of Soviet troops in the FRG, cases of mass-scale desertions, arms dealing and so on. If all this is really happening, wouldn't it be better to complete the troop withdrawal as soon as possible?

Y.K. A likely acceleration of the withdrawal of Western Group of Troops is not a simple question and has several aspects to it.

From the military-strategic point of view we have to determine for ourselves the role now played, under the new distribution of forces in Europe, by the Western Group of Troops (WGT) and the Northern Group of Troops in Poland, closely linked to it. Has the threat of attack or armed interference in our internal affairs on the part of other states increased or decreased? Now that cardinal socio-political changes have taken place in East European countries, are the far advanced groups of troops an advantage or a disadvantage in ensuring the security of our state and its non-liability to any blackmail from abroad? A competent answer to these questions has been given, first of all, by the Ministry of Defence. It is clear, however, that a great deal depends on the leadership of our country and the USSR Supreme Soviet, on their understanding of the nature of military threat today.

But even if we come to the conclusion that from the viewpoint of military strategy the deployment of Soviet troops in Germany has lost it previous importance, the technical aspects of the issue remain: how long will it take to bring back personnel and military property, to build houses and sell the real estate belonging to Soviet troops and left in Germany.

The schedule of Soviet troop withdrawals from the FRG has now been worked out with due account taken of all the above-mentioned factors and is to be carried out by the end of 1994.

As for the negative phenomena in the WGT, their origin is, to a large extent, similar to that of the phenomena peculiar to our society in this period of transition. And to that is added the fact that our servicemen are now in a Western country with hard currency and with all the attendant temptations, but have no opportunity to enjoy them fully. All this calls for greater attention to the WGT, better selection of officers, warrant officers and sergeants, and intensive political education work.

N.T. In what way is the FRG going to help Soviet citizens of German ethnic origin? Won't it lead to the formation in the USSR of special zones in which the representatives of one nationality will enjoy the boons of foreign aid and prosper amidst a difficult situation faced by the representatives of another nationality?

Y.K. About 2 million people of German origin live in the Soviet Union. The number of Soviet Germans emigrating to the FRG has sharply increased of late. Nearly 150,000 of them left this country in 1990 alone. The steady growth of this number is a matter of concern. There are many reasons for this. The main reason, naturally, is the general discomfort of our life. But, quite obviously, the difficulties with the development of national culture and the study of the language also play a role.

Certain changes have taken place of late in the policy of the FRG government regarding the immigration of Soviet Germans. Formerly their influx into the FRG was actively encouraged whereas today, as the FRG is facing a mass inrush from a number of East European countries, the emphasis is laid on not prompting Soviet Germans to emigrate but to help create for them in the USSR appropriate conditions for self-development.

First of all this concerns aid to Soviet Germans in order to provide them with better opportunities to develop their culture and to use their language. The FRG intends to help in the study of the German language in schools, higher and other educational establishments where the children of Soviet Germans study; in training and improving the qualification of teachers. Germany is prepared to supply study aids, including those which are supposed to be used with TV, radio- and audiovisual equipment and computers.

Besides this under study now in the FRG is ecological aid to Soviet Germans as, for example, the construction of mobile meat packing plants, cheese dairies and other similar institutions in the places of compact habitation of Soviet Germans. The government of the FRG realizes that this aid must be used not only by Soviet Germans but also by the entire population of the regions in which they live, irrespective of their nationality.

Photo from Stern (Germany)

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Birds of a feather

The former leader of the GDR, Erich Honecker, was illegally taken from Germany. This has resulted in a worsening in relations between Bonn and Moscow where there most likely are those who have had thoughts of rescuing the former head of state security Erich Mielke

Soviet military bases in Germany have the status of extra-territoriality. Therefore border police and customs officials do not have the right to inspect aircraft coming and going from these bases. It was from one of these bases on March 13 that the former Chairman of the Council of State of the GDR and General Secretary of the Socalist Unity Party of Germany Erich Honecker was flown to the Soviet Union. His lawyer, along with Soviet ambassador Vladislav Terekhov, said that 78-year-old Honecker required swift medical attention.

Bonn did not share Moscow's confidence in the superiority of Soviet medicine and usually reserved German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher demanded the immediate return of Honecker to Germany. The German legal code, along with the Soviet legal code, forbids any person under investigation for a crime to leave the country. On November 30 of last year, a warrant was issued for the arrest of Erich Honecker, but the police came knocking on closed doors.

The first few months following his ejection from his villa in the government village of Wandlitz, Honecker spent with a protestant pastor and then in spring of last year he took up residence at a Soviet military base. Two days after a warrant was issued for his arrest, he was sent to a military hospital. Requests by German authorities that he, a German citizen, be handed over to them were denied.

Was it the case that the guards feared an attack on the base to kidnap Honecker? Did they decide, just to be safe, to send him out of the country? If Honecker's fate was earlier the subject of behind-doors diplomacy, for the German government obviously regards as its most important task the safeguarding of good Soviet-German ties, this act has resulted in the first source of conflict between Moscow and Bonn since the unification of Germany. Why damage good relationship with the continent's major power?

Perhaps what we are dealing with is an innocent man who has became the victim of a punitive court process? We can draw on the experience of our own country relating to show trials being set up as a way of combatting dissent. Perhaps what we are dealing with is an instance of legal pettifoggery in which insignificant transgressions are being used as an excuse to defame an innocent person? Such being the case, although the kidnapping of the citizen of another country is a crude and inadmissible violation of international law, one which needs instantly to be rectified, we can at least understand the motives behind the actions of those who did the kidnapping.

So what can Erich Honecker justly be accused of? Giving the order to kill innocent people which resulted in the deaths of 201 people.

Erich Honecker as the head of the Communist Party of East Germany signed the order which served as the basis for the shooting by the border police of those attempting to flee from the "first state of workers and peasants on German soil." Honecker ordered to install along the border with West Germany and along the Wall mines and automatically activating machine guns against not foreign intruders but against his own citizens wanting to leave the GDR.

From the very moment the GDR was founded, East Germans fled to the West in the millions, leaving their homes and the graves of their relatives. The border with the West was closed and the Berlin Wall was erected not to protect the East from some mythical enemy, but to keep its own citizenry in. East Germany made money of the lack of desire of its citizens to live in a socialist country and it made a profit trading its citizens to West Germany at a cost of from DM 40,000 to 96,000 for every released citizen, a cost Bonn was willing to pay.

Erich Honecker ruled his country for more than half of its existence. The results of his rule became clear during the people's rebellion in the fall of 1989 which led to the the destruction of the socialist regime and put an end to the 40-year division of Germany.

The simulataneous existence of a socialist GDR and a capitalist FRG was an experi-

The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the Chairman the Council of State of the GDR Erich Honecker at Vnukovo airport in Moscow is met by members of the Politburo of the CC CPSU and leaders of the Party and state. Photo taken in 1985. Who met him this time, after the issuance of the warrant for his arrest?

ment in its pure form. In the socialist camp the GDR was considered a model state, while compared to the FRG it possessed no advantages whatsoever. With the exception of the Party elite, all citizens of East Germany wanted to live in the West and in the end they achieved their aim. The regime created a "model" socialist economy which proved to be completely ineffective and its inefficiency could not even be compensated for by the quality of its German work force.

Today Soviet newspapers print stories about the hardships of those living in the eastern territories of Germany, hardships they experience not because they are now part of the West, but because the sad results of forty years of socialism have become all too evident. In order to establish a normal set of economic relations and to achieve the living standard of West Germans, still more years of hard labour will be necessary.

The former leaders of the GDR seemed to be Titans whose single word decided the fate of an entire nation. Should the Titans be subject to prosecution? Should they be charged with the creation of a model socialist state?

The Titans were overthrown in two senses. They were not only deprived of their posts, they were stripped of the illusion of their own grandeur. Honecker is accused of handing down death licences. His colleagues on the Politburo are accused of corruption and misappropriation of state property. This January the former Politburo member and leader of the East German Labour Unions, Harry Tisch, who embezzeled funds from his organization's treasury was put on trial. Waiting to stand trial are two other former Politburo members, chief deputy head of state Werner Krolikowski and the secretary of the SUPG, Hermann Axen. They are also to be charged with embezzlement of state funds. The leaders of the Party built their own socialism in the villas of the Party village of Wandlitz.

Those who removed Honecker to the Soviet Union are convinced that the former General Secretary and his comrades-in-arms are innocent of any crime. Did the leaders of the Communist parties in other states of the socialist bloc act in a different fashion?

Speaking at the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, KGB head Vladimir Kryuchkov called upon his country to help his former colleague Erich Mielke who for 32 years ran the Ministry of State Security of the GDR.

Eighty-three-year-old Mielke did not escape to a Soviet military base in time and he is now held in a German prison. He suffers from Parkinson's disease and dotage, and he is not likely to be subject to trial, though his case is being investigated. Erich Mielke commanded the border policemen who shot at defectors, and gave orders to agents of the state security service who sent innocent people to prison.

After the overthrow of the East German government, German newspapers ran numerous stories about Mielke whom they referred to as evil incarnate, a mystical figure who forced the entire country to live in

This German tried to defect from East Germany. He was shot by Erich Mielke's henchmen by the Berlin Wall

fear. The papers will have their revenge, uncovering all the dark secrets and intimate details of the life of the former head of the state security. Reporters tell of his interest in hunting and football and about how before the Nazis came to power during the days of the Weimar Republic he was accused of the murder of two police officers. They tell of how by means of intrigue and various machinations he climbed his way to the ministerial post, eliminating his political opponents and how he assiduously gathered compromising information on his fellow Politburo members, including Erich Honecker.

Germans were especially shocked to learn that Mielke gave protection to members of the Baader-Meinhof gang who were pursued by police forces all over Europe for crimes of murder and robbery. They also learned that Mielke gave assistance to Middle Eastern terrorists and even provided the Libyans with the opportunity to plant a bomb at the West Berlin discotheque swarmed with people. For all of this he added to his various decorations, the Star of Hero of the Soviet Union among them, a two-metre long diamond-adorned sword given to him by Muammar Qaddafi.

But was Mielke the incarnation of evil? Was he an evil-doer who held complete control over the entire country? It is very convenient to lay the blame for everything on a single man. But if that is the case, then the Germans who rose up in November of 1989 should have been satisfied merely with the fact that they deposed Honecker and Mielke.

Erich Mielke was just the man needed by the department he served all his life. Anyone else in his position would have done exactly the same thing. To a certain degree, he was merely another cog in the giant state security machinery, a machinery which stood on its own. He fine-tuned and carefully steered the mechanism which was in fact able to operate effectively only thanks to the 200,000 security officers (in a country of 16 million) and many hundreds of thousands of voluntary collaborators who served the security machinery and were proud to do so.

They turned the GDR into a police state which had a file on every third citizen in the country and where the entire structure of society was teemed with informers. They corrupted East Germans and turned the GDR into a country where respectable people, for money, an apartment or a trip abroad, would inform on their relatives, neighbours or fellow workers. Mielke and his underlings engaged in weapons trade, illegal foreign currency activities, they stole people's post, gave protection to foreign terrorists, and sent dissidents to psychiatric hospitals. They created the ideal system of control over their fellow citizens.

Even Egon Krenz, who for several months served as General Secretary, called the Ministry of State Security a state within a state. Krenz supervised this organization for several years and he knew what he was talking about when he said: "The state security apparatus ran all of society and deprived people of their human rights."

But to his colleagues in Moscow, Erich Mielke is not a criminal but a fellow operator who provided the KGB with, according to some estimates, some 60 percent of intelligence data on West Germany and NATO, in a word a friend in need. What is not clear is exactly how he can be helped. Perhaps an international campaign in support of Mielke as a prisoner of conscience and a political prisoner who is suffering for his convictions should be held? Kidnapping him might prove to be quite a problem.

Vitaly Shuvalov

Photos from TASS and Die Zeit (FRG)

The merits and demerits of compromise

The largest international organization is at a crossroads. What must be done to restore its authority?

New Times correspondent Alexander Polyukhov talks with **Karl-Erik SVARTBERG,** President of the United Nations Association of Sweden

New Times. One can argue whether the Soviet Union is deliberately giving up the role of superpower or is losing it against its will, but the fact remains that Moscow no longer opposes Washington or Beijing, leaving vacuum in the "battlefields" of the political, ideological and sometimes military confrontation. Who is destined to fill the vacuum – the United States, China or other countries, or the United Nations?

Karl-Erik Svartberg. The small and medium-sized states would like to see a stronger United Nations. That is why they were deeply satisfied when Mikhail Gorbachev declared at the General Assembly a positive change of Soviet policy with respect to the United Nations. Moscow's support of the United Nations, its peacekeeping operations in particular, quickly yielded tangible results in 1988 and 1989. I shall cite only two of several examples: a settlement of the conflict in Namibia and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan.

N.T. Strangely enough, the crisis in the Persian Gulf did not strengthen the United Nations' authority and, moreover, cast doubts on it. Many people do not understand why, having passed a series of resolutions against the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the Security Council "suddenly" abandoned further efforts, leaving the guidance of combat operations to the United States.

K.-E. S. The Security Council made a mistake by not using Article 42 of the Charter for taking military action against Iraq. It should have kept control over US actions instead of giving "Kuwait and its allies" carte blanche for taking "necessary measures." As a result, all major decisions were made not by the United Nations but the United States, which decisions were made not by the United Nations but the United States, which had assumed command functions. The Security Council proved unable to stop the war when Iraq agreed to pull out of Kuwait and, as many people believe, that country could be liberated by peaceful means. Its activity was blocked until the military defeat of Iraq. If the United States really chose the plan of "throwing Iraq back to the stone age" with the help of an unlimited war (as some people demanded) it could have put the scheme into effect without UN approval, by relying on the resolutions adopted by the UN earlier. Such a situation is intolerable.

N.T. This time Washington displayed reasonable self-control and did not began to provoke the United Nations. But in the past the United States' attitude towards the UN was often negative and even hostile. Nobody knows what it will be in the future. Don't you think that this great power freely interprets the United Nations' resolutions and its Charter? It is not an idle question now that the former balance of strength between the East and the West, the Soviet Union and the United States no longer exists.

K.-E. S. It is, of course, pleasant to hear President Bush's statements on the primacy of international law, the need to observe UN resolutions. Nevertheless, quite recently the United States refused to carry out the International Court's decision censuring the mining of Nicaraguan ports. Washington often blocked the adoption of decisions in the United Nations, for instance, in connection with the US invasion of Grenada and Panama.

Unfortunately, the Soviet Union repeatedly acted in the same spirit in the past. But today the United States pretends to have a new role in the world and therefore it must prove, as this is done by the Soviet Union, its adherence to UN ideals. It will be recalled that the Soviet Union has started paying its debt to the organization while the United States still owes it approximately 500 million dollars. The continuing financial pressure on the United Nations limits its effectiveness, especially in the matter of large-scale activities designed to avert conflicts.

N.T. The time has apparently come to set up a structure of the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations, a sort of general headquarters according to its Charter. If this is not done, the United Nations will again have to entrust other states with operations to repulse the next armed aggression.

K.-E. S. Of course, without a working Military Staff Committee the Security Council and the Secretary-General will again be tempted to "stand aside" and ask other states to assume responsibility for the adoption of decisions. Suppose a powerful aggressor attacks not oil-producing Kuwait, which has rich allies, but a poor country. Who will risk billions of dollars and the lives of thousands of soldiers for its sake? Only the United Nations can protect such a country.

N.T. Are there other ways of strengthening the United Nations? Its Charter was drafted at the end of the Second World War and can scarcely meet all present-day requirements. Isn't it necessary to revise the Charter by 1995, when the 50th anniversary of the organization will be observed?

K.-E. S. The strength of the United Nations is determined by the will of its member countries. The stronger their will, the greater will be the authority and effectiveness of the organization. The United Nations, which kept out the war in the Persian Gulf, now has to restore the trust of world opinion.

I don't think that a revision of the Charter is a proper way for this purpose. First, it is difficult to introduce changes and, second, the Charter is not so bad. The practice of applying it in some fields should simply be reappraised creatively. For instance, in the opinion of some experts military operations in the Persian Gulf did not correspond to the Charter. They say that Article 42 was not applied while Article 41 was given a broad interpretation. Lawyers joke that the Security Council resolutions "got stuck" between Articles 41 and 42. It will be recalled that the Charter does not envisage either UN peace-keeping operations in the way they have been practised since 1961, though they have been undertaken on a wide scale. The peace-keeping force had 50,000 Swedes only. Experience has shown that such actions are useful and an appropriate practice has taken shape too.

It is not a matter of legal trickery but of working out and observing definite rules of raising and using military force under the UN flag and command. In such cases Security Council resolutions must be "watertight," leaving no loopholes for the dilution of their meaning.

N.T. A UN peace-keeping force was formed on the initiative of Secretary-General Dag Hammerskjöld, who dared rise above the level of the UN "chief official" and act as the leader of the world community. As a result, he was severely criticized, and then he died in an air crash in Congo under mysterious circumstances. Other Secretaries-General were colourless persons who tried to be "good" for every one. What kind of person should be UN Secretary-General be?

K.-E. S. There is widespread opinion that after their clash with Dag Hammerskjöld the great powers, permanent members of the Security Council, will never allow a strong personality to head the United Nations. They want to keep control over the "situation," that is, the United Nations. Perez de Cuellar is a symbol of the similar order of things. He is like a leaf in the wind: he either rises together with the UN or goes down. It is tragic when the Secretary-General stands on the side of the road, with dangerous crisis, like the one in the Persian Gulf, raging. World opinion is dissatisfied with the UN's passivity while Perez de Cuellar tries to justify himself by saying that the war was waged by allies, not the United Nations.

It is difficult to find a Secretary-General who possesses a harmonious set of strong personal qualities, who would not follow the lead of great powers, who could express the will of the majority of member countries and become the leader of the world community. Unfortunately, extreme caution and a strong inclination to compromise are typical features of traditional candidates. I am not sure that even in new conditions the Security Council will be able to abandon the practice of selecting candidates according to these parameters.

N.T. Incidentally, no system of selection really exists. A candidate may begin a campaign himself or can be nominated by a group of countries, or appear unexpectedly after backstage manoeuvres in the Security Council.

K.-E.S. It is interesting that UN specialized agencies have a more orderly system of electing their heads. It would be wise to apply their experience in the election of Secretaries-General. It is necessary to determine beforehand what type of politician is suited to this post, find several candidates, examine them and then offer them for consideration by the General Assembly. Until now attempts were made to find a man who would not strengthen the United Nations but would suit the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Britain and France. The choice was often made at the last moment.

Drawing by Igor Shein

N.T. It is proposed to hold the election of a new Secretary-General not next autumn, when the term of office of Perez de Cuellar expires, but this spring so that the "novice" could draw up a package of proposals for strengthening the United Nations by the time of his inauguration. Is this a real possibility?

K.-E. S. It is now the turn of a representative of Africa to be elected to the highest post in the United Nations. African countries are looking for a common candidate. But so far there is no official information about a concrete person. I sincerely hope that this year the United Nations will be led by a Third World politician who will be able to take a new look at the organization's role. True, the position of the Security Council's permanent members will be decisive again. There is a hope that not only the Soviet Union but also the United States will abandon the search for a candidate agreeable to them. However, many people still doubt that the Security Council's permanent members will reach agreement on the choice of a relatively strong and colourful personality.

N.T. It seems that the situation will change slowly as long as the UN remains an organization for governments, not peoples. For, in principle, the notion "United Nations" is broader than simply a totality of diplomats from the member countries. Sweden is an exception to the common rule. It was able to draw its citizens' attention to the United Nations and involve the public in the work of the Swedish delegation. How is this achieved?

K.-E. S. Indeed, apart from the "permanent delegations," Sweden, Denmark and Norway send representatives of the public to the UN General Assembly. Every year 20 representatives of the Swedish Parliament, the Central Trade Unions' Association, the Industrial Union and other mass organizations get an opportunity to go for a month at government expense in order to take part in the sessions of various UN bodies. This allows them to learn better what is going on in the United Nations and to receive first-hand information on any subject. An important contribution is also made by Swedes enlisted in peace-keeping forces or engaged in UN projects.

The United Nations Association of Sweden disseminates knowledge about the activity of the world community and informs the population about Sweden's role in this organization. The association includes all public movements and major political groups in the country. Their total membership is 26 million, four times greater than the population of Sweden. The Swedish government is conscious of the positive attitude of the majority of citizens towards the United Nations and seeks to enhance its role in the world.

N.T. In such conditions it is difficult for Swedish leaders to make a secret deal in the United Nations or against it or to act disregarding or contrary to its decisions.

K.-E. S. Indeed, the Swedes understand that the country's policy in the United Nations must be free of domestic policy considerations and the interests of one particular party. I would like to see a similar situation in the majority or at least in many countries. Opposition to the strengthening of the UN and destructive criticism of its actions would then become unpopular or impossible.

How to buy for dollars when you haven't got any

Or why Polish goods disappeared from Soviet shops

DARIUSZ LIEDWOROWSKI and GEORGY SHCHUKIN speak about what is going on behind the scenes of Soviet-Polish trade and try to predict the future of the bilateral trade relations. D. Liedworowski, who is about 40, is Poland's youngest minister in charge of the key foreign trade department. A vice-minister in the former government, Liedworowski negotiated a new kind of Soviet-Polish economic relations with Moscow. G.Shchukin is an experienced foreign trade specialist, he had worked in the USA and is now in his fourth year as head of the Soviet Trade Mission in Poland.

Today they exchange opinions via *New Times'* correspondent in Poland, Rudolf Borecki.

New Times. Poland, one third of whose foreign trade was once conducted with the Soviet Union, has virtually disappeared as a Soviet trade partner. How did this happen?

Georgy Shchukin. We believe that in 1991 the sum total of our trade turnover with Poland will be cut in half, as compared with 1990. The reasons are obvious: we have been trading at world prices and in hard currency since January 1 of this year, and hard currency is exactly what neither we nor the Poles have.

Dariusz Liedworowski: United Germany is becoming Poland's No 1 economic partner. I would like to note that the switch-over to hard-currency trade was almost painless in our relations with the former GDR, now a part of United Germany. As for the Soviet Union, the situation is much more complicated.

N.T. Do you see any way out of this?

G.Sh. We have signed what we call the bilateral treaty on reciprocal supplies for 1991. The Soviet Union will export about 20 kinds of products. Unfortunately, raw materials will continue to constitute the bulk of Soviet exports: oil, gas, iron ores, aluminium, electricity. Poland will reciprocate by selling us a much wider variety of goods.

D.L. Poland also has something to complain about concerning this treaty. It covers only those export items which are backed by the centralized all-Union budget. For the Soviet Union such items are mostly medicines, coal and sulphur. Many traditional products, like foods and garments for instance, which Poland used to export to the USSR, have been omitted from the list. The explanation given was that such goods would no longer be imported at the expense of the state budget, but would be the subject of "regional foreign trade interests." This is a real pity. Since last year we have had a substantial surplus of foods and consumer goods.

N.T. Why do your Soviet counterparts keep silent?

G.Sh. We are not prepared to back our contracts with hard currency. The Soviet authorities decided that factories, plants, cooperatives, and whole republics must earn hard currency themselves. OK. But the state takes away up to 40 percent of their hard currency earnings, 10 to 20 percent goes to municipal, republican and other authorities. Naturally, producers lose all interest in exporting their products. Besides, where can they get hard currency? Our Polish partners have it easier: at least the Polish zloty is internally convertible.

D.L. The situation in Poland is indeed more favourable. We started economic reforms a year ago and the psychology of our businessmen had enough time to mature to the new rules of the game. And Soviet businessmen and producers, I believe, are still in the dark.

Moreover, Polish merchants do not need any permission from the state: no licences or concessions or anything. If you have hard currency, you are free to buy anything you like. If you have goods to offer, you are welcome to sell them. In your country such independent businessmen are virtually non-existent.

N.T. What about barter deals?

G.Sh. Barter deals are prohibited, and rightly so. It is no secret that some businesses have been known to offer goods they did not produce themselves: petrol, mazut and others. This is, naturally, inadmissible.

N.T. Where is the way out then?

G.Sh. We need a transition period and a lengthy one at that. We should have switched over to hard currency not all at once but gradually, through "fair" barter, clearing payments and other "evolutionary" measures.

N.T. "Fair" barter is a plain thing, but what is your idea of clearing payments?

G.Sh. I see clearing payments as a fair system of payments by way of counting in mutual obligations. For instance, we sell gas this year and in return we get sugar, cigarettes, and we are now negotiating purchases of butter, powdered milk and poultry. Our payments are based on the prices of the London Exchange. The Soviet Vneshekonombank and the Polish Bank for Export Development have already opened mutual accounts to serve clearing operations. Besides, if for instance we supply Poland with gas before our

Polish partners have supplied us with foodstuffs, we get an annual 6.5 percent interest rate. If we are the ones who are too slow, we have to pay the interest to the Poles.

N.T. What are the advantages of clearing payments?

G.Sh. They allow us to cancel mutual debts without transferring hard currency on every concrete operation. We can draw a balance of payments every three months, every six months, or once a year. This allows the two sides to accumulate the necessary amount of hard currency which we dramatically lack. This problem cannot be solved in just one step.

D.L. Another disadvantage of pay-as-you-buy deals is that we have to settle our accounts through US banks that charge us interest.

G.Sh. New forms of bilateral trade could be very useful and convenient for those Soviet and Polish enterprises which have long functioned on the basis of long-term cooperation and division of labour. Clearing could "save" the 170 Polish and 400 Soviet factories and plants whose production is closely connected with each other.

N.T. Could you clarify for me the situation regarding the Polish debt. According to some estimates, not so long ago it ran as high as 5 billion transferable rubles. What is the size of the debt today?

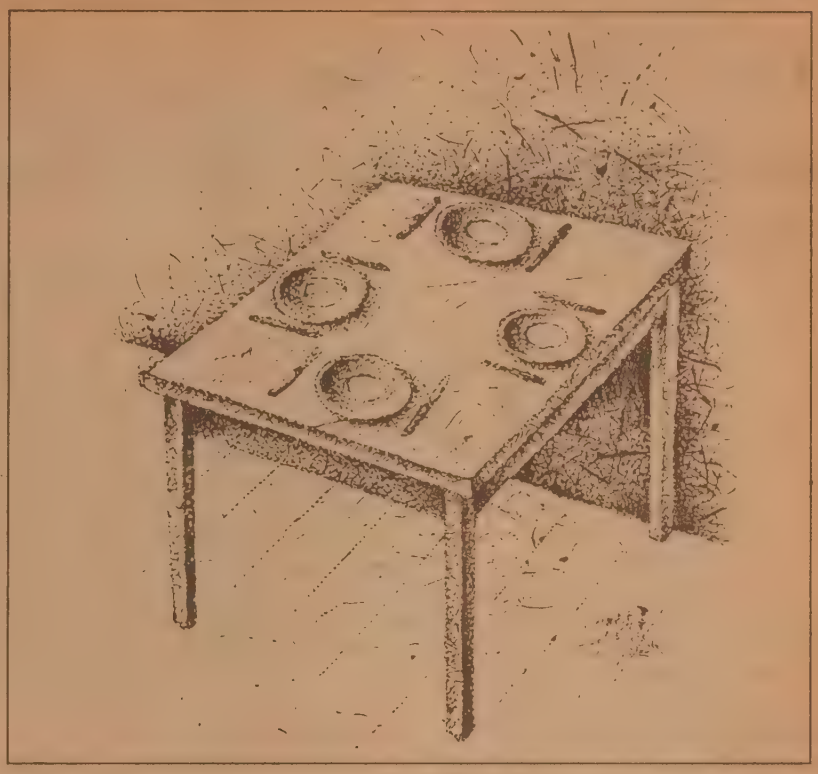
G.Sh. It is true that as of January 1, 1990, Poland owed the Soviet Union 4.7 billion transferable rubles and 1.5 billion dollars. On request of Polish officials, the debt in dollars was fixed to be paid in installments over a ten-year period. As for the ruble debt, events of last year have altered the situation and the balance of payments reached 6.3 billion rubles... with the Soviet Union oweing money to Poland.

N.T. In other words, the Poles have not only managed to eliminate their debt, they have changed the situation in such a way that we owe them a billion and a half. Are we incapable of trading effectively?

G.Sh. In 1990 we sharply cut our exports to Poland. We failed to fulfil our obligations regarding the export of oil, petrol, diesel fuel and electricity. We virtually cut completely deliveries of machinery. The Soviet Union declared a ban on the export to Poland of television sets, refrigerators, bicycles and other items.

N.T. It seems, though, that Poland was able quickly to make up for shortfalls in the provision of these items, especially of consumer goods, which it began importing from Western Europe, South Korea, Japan...

G.Sh. Precisely. And now it is going to be extremely difficult for us to return to the Polish market. I feel that it was a mistake to cease the export of such consumer items to Poland. Even given huge shortage of such items in our market, this was an extremely shortsighted policy.



Drawing by Rein Lauks

N.T. There exists an opinion that the Soviet Union artificially induced a situation in which it dominates in trade with Poland over other countries. It is said that our most clever invention was the immaterial "transferable" ruble which skimmed off for us not only a great deal of Polish property but also a large amount of the dollars invested by Polish entrepreneurs. For example, when the Poles constructed ships for this country they were forced to purchase engines, electronic equipment and other things for foreign currency and then sell the resulting final product to us for rubles. In a word, it was as if the country paid a bonus to the Soviet Union.

G.Sh. Such ideas are purely propagandistic. Payment in rubles was more disadvantageous to us than to our trading partners. First of all, we purchased for foreign currency many of the items we eventually exported to Poland. For example television tubes, some automotive parts, equipment for oil and gas pipelines. Our refrigerator factory was purchased from France. One could give many examples of something that is a normal practice the world over. Second, we sold raw materials (75 percent of our deliveries to Poland) at prices as a rule lower than those on the world market. The Poles themselves have stated that because they will now have to purchase oil at world market prices this will cost them additional several billion dollars a year.

D.L. Since we traded in transferable rubles in five different artificially created exchange rates, everyone involved constantly suspected the other of gaining from this some sort of material advantage. Now that Poland is operating according to the laws of the international market, it is discovering all the advantages of trade with the Soviet Union as both a supplier of goods and a vast market. When the producer begins to operate at his own risk, all former accusations of who deceived whom simply disappear. It is no longer important whether dollars were invested in products sold to the East as payment is now received only in freely convertible currencies and at world market prices. That means that the only regulator of economic behaviour becomes the profit motive. I am convinced that many reluctant managers will soon come to realize the vast potential the Soviet market has to offer.

N.T. What is the outlook for cooperation between our two countries? What are we looking for? What do we have to offer one another?

G.Sh. Common sense tells us that it

would simply be a crime to destroy a trade infrastructure that has existed for decades. Cooperation has been smoothly worked out in dozens of industries, wide-guage railroad tracks have been laid between sources of raw materials and factories. Oil and gas pipelines have also been laid. It should be obvious that it is more advantageous for both of us to buy and sell oil and gas to one another as neither of us require tankers of any kind. There are many prospects for border trade of every kind. I have great confidence in the prospects for trade with the newly declared free economic zone in Kaliningrad which has an extensive border with Poland. I have no doubts that in the end we will find mutually beneficial means of cooperation and that we simply can't live without one another. Thus I am optimistic.

L.D. I think that ties between our two countries will develop on the level of inter-republic and inter-producer contacts. The dependence on central institutions, as intermediate bodies, will be diminishing. But until the foreign trade competence of the republics is defined, it will be impossible to conclude contracts.

N.T. In other words, it is time to set up market relations in the area of foreign trade as well...

L.D. ... which by no means requires that the central government be excluded. The state should support and encourage trade first and foremost in those areas which are absolutely necessary to the economies of the two countries, all the time safeguarding national interests. Second, the state should take the initiative in establishing various trade centres and organizations. Third, the government can and should create foundations designed to stimulate foreign trade. We have established, for example, the Export Creditors Insurance Corporation in order to provide businessmen with various guarantees (formerly that role was played by the state budget). As for Soviet-Polish economic cooperation, I share my colleague's optimism and see my duties as Minister in doing everything possible to see our relationship develop in a constructive and mutually beneficial fashion.

Rudolf Borecki,
our own correspondent
WARSAW

■

Who was betrayed by the president?

The democratic moves of President Frederik de Klerk have split whites while failing so far to unite blacks

The stir provoked by President Frederik de Klerk's February speech in parliament refuses to subside. He has called on MPs to rescind the main laws on apartheid – the acts on separate residence and use of land according to one's race as well as the registration of the population on the basis of the colour of one's skin. Conservatives interrupted the President's speech with shouts of "No!", "Traitor!" and "The butcher of the Afrikaners!" – and then walked out of the hall in protest. Their leader, Andries Treurnicht, announced a course towards confrontation with the President.

In the parliament's lobby, some MPs supported the conservatives believing that Frederik de Klerk jumped the gun while others condemned the President for being too slow.

The relative unity of whites has come to an end while the unity of blacks is still a long way off.

A year ago, the President of the Republic of South Africa lifted the ban on the activity of the African National Congress (ANC), the Communist Party and other organizations and spoke out in favour of a dialogue with the black majority. Political figures, including the leader of the ANC, Nelson Mandela, have been released from detention. The process of transformations has begun to gain momentum.

The ANC has declared 1991 a year of mass actions in support of the creation in the country of a segregation-free, democratic society. It looked like the negotiations in the President's residence in Groote Schuur ended the enmity between the Congress and the government. It was decided that a joint commission be set up for the elaboration of a common policy, but this decision received the thumbs down from the ANC's military wing, the Umkhonto We Sizwe, which refused to stop armed struggle against the authorities. Pretoria insisted that the activity of the ANC fighters was at odds with the Congress' official declaration on the suspension of combat actions. The ANC leaders tried to save the situation by arguing that the Umkhonto We Sizwe has the right to "self-defence." Yet the two sides have failed to reach any agreement.

Meanwhile, the government held negotiations with other political organizations of South Africa's black majority which displeased ANC leaders who accused the administration of using the Zulu movement Inkatha to undermine the unity of blacks.

The relations between ANC leaders whose main support are the Xhosa people, and the leader of the Inkatha movement, the Zulus' chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, have been marked by ups and downs. January saw yet another flare-up in the war of words that was followed by new battles with new victims. ANC President Oliver Tambo spoke about the possibility of "the creation of our own military force."

The meeting of the leaders of the opposing sides in the largest hotel of Durban put in the spotlight differences on questions of principle. From the very beginning, the movement of Mangosuthu Buthelezi did not support the policy of international economic sanctions and cultural boycott against South Africa, rejected armed struggle as a way of doing away with the apartheid regime and did not accept the idea of nationalization of the key branches of industry in the event of coming to power. The two sides have also failed to agree on the need to convene the Constitutional Assembly and create a transitional government, with the ANC being in favour of these steps and the Inkatha taking exception to them. Nevertheless, the two leaders have agreed to stop attacking each other and give up the policy of scaring one another.

But the beginning of March saw the onset of new bloody conflicts between the supporters of the Congress and the partisans of the Inkatha.

Another powerful force in the black movement is represented by the Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa (PAC).

In the 1960s the ANC and the PAC began to have serious differences over the tactics of the struggle for the future of a segregation-free South Africa and the abolishment of apartheid. At that time the members of the PAC stood on radical, extremist positions while the ANC leaders in general followed the tactics of a peaceful political dialogue with the authorities. The ANC was striving to create a wide, anti-racist, democratic movement and fought for the introduction of economic sanctions

President de Klerk and the ANC leader Nelson Mandela: it is time to make decisions

against Pretoria. As for the PAC, it mainly trained fighters and carried out terrorist acts. Their differences led to an overt struggle.

The leaders of the ANC were the first to leave the "path of war" and to take steps to meet the other side halfway. In their turn, initially the members of the PAC took up the proposal to create a common front against apartheid. Six moths ago, Nelson Mandela and one of the PAC leaders, Johnson Mlambo, agreed on a compromise formula: apartheid must be totally abolished, and to achieve this end all forms of struggle are acceptable. But the PAC resolutely rejected the ANC's calls for the search of compromises with the authorities with a view to finding a political decision to these problems. Thus, the idea of creating a common front remained unrealized.

At its recent congress PAC reaffirmed its firm position stating that it had no intention to enter into any negotiations with the regime until general democratic elections were held and the Constitutional Assembly was convened. The PAC called for the stepping up of a "struggle on all fronts."

The day after Frederik de Klerk's February speech, Nelson Mandela made a statement which boils down to the following: apartheid has not died, hence the ANC calls on the international community not to weaken its policy of sanctions.

Speaking on a possible development of events, the ANC leader stressed that the Congress is interested in the creation of a mixed government or any other forms of transitional government, and while supporting the convening of the Constitutional Assembly, the ANC did not intend to cooperate with any governmental institution created without the participation of the black majority. "The minority regime wants to effect the transition to democracy under its own control and according to its own recipes," pointed out Nelson Mandela. The conclusion: the apartheid regime must be abolished immediately and without any reservations. The categorical nature and the tone of the demands seemed to bode a new conflict. But much to the surprise of many, on February 12, the ANC and the government held 11-hour secret negotiations. There was very little time for reaching an agreement on the conditions of the protocol, hence the dramatic work was carried out in the VIP lounge of the Cape Town airport. The mere fact that no motorcades were rushing down the streets, that there was no heavy police presence and no preliminary publications in the press pointed to the exclusively businesslike character of the negotiations with both sides being equally interested in them.

Little by little, the results of the negotiations are becoming known to the public. The government has allowed the ANC to return home all political exiles and promised to speed up the release of political prisoners. The leaders of the ANC pledged to stop the military training of fighters on the territory of the country and put an end to the war of words.

* * *

Not long ago we had a chance to take part in a meeting of the Rresident with journalists. The leader of South Africa spoke in favour of speeding up the transformations. He admitted that without the abolishment of the apartheid regime South Africa could have no future. Frederik de Klerk called the current year the year of cardinal reforms, peace and stability in the region in the interests of all people of South Africa.

In general, the intentions of the ANC and the Pretoria administration basically coincide. But one would be too optimistic to hope for the two sides pooling their efforts.

Esther Waugh,
political observer for *Pretoria News*
(the Republic
of South Africa)
Nikolai Reshetnyak,
our own correspondent
PRETORIA

The Inkatha fighters: back on the war path

Photos from Der Spiegel (Germany)

OUTSIDER'S PERSPECTIVE

The Russian myth: empire and people

Russian patriots and Russian nationalists. Since Ivan the Terrible they have not been one and the same

Prof. Geoffrey Hosking,
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At the First Congress of People's Deputies in the summer of 1989, the writer Valentin Rasputin suggested that, in view of the rising tide of anti-Russian national feeling sweeping the republics, maybe Russia would do well to secede from the Soviet Union. Few people took him seriously at the time: indeed many probably didn't understand what he was saying. For nine tenths of the world's journalists Russia and the USSR were in any case quite simply synonyms.

Yet, almost exactly a year later, what Rasputin proposed had largely come to pass. The Russian Republic had declared its sovereignty, which, while stopping short of actual secession, meant asserting its right to ownership of its own resources and insisting on the precedence of its legal enactments over those issued by the Union (I nearly said "by Moscow," which would have been confusing, but would have highlighted the paradoxical nature of the situation). This, though little remarked in the West at the time, was a profoundly important moment in the history of Russia. It was the foundation of a Russian nation-state, the first time such a formation has ever existed.

Nobles, peasants, church...

Russia, as a political entity, has always been an empire, never a nation. Kievan Rus was a loose of duchies, not a nation-state, and long before Muscovy had reassembled the peoples of Rus, it had embarked on the road of imperial expansion, absorbing non-Russian territories and tribes. From that time on, perhaps the most important fact about the history of Rus /Russia is that the empire has always oppressed the nation. State-building has impeded nation-building. Why is this so?

Basically, for geopolitical reasons. The vast open frontiers of northern Eurasia have been Russia's curse and her blessing, a deadly threat and a limitless opportunity. They enabled the Mongols to invade and devastate her in the thirteenth century; but they also enabled her four centuries later to reverse that invasion and establish dominion over the largest expanse of territory every ruled over by any state, an expanse which, moreover, went on growing till the mid-twentieth century. Every time Russia expanded, it did so in order to absorb and control the source of some danger, real or imagined – but very often real. In fact, Russia became in terms of what you might call "square kilometre-centuries" the greatest of all historical empires, outdoing by a considerable margin her closest rivals, the British and Chinese.

Viewed soberly, the empire exceeded by far the capacity of Russia's population to defend and administer it. To do so at all required both extreme concentration of resources and also the cooptation of outsiders. This was the purpose of the formation of that peculiarly Russian type of nobility, the dvoryanstvo, created by the absolutist state (in part from the aristocracy of conquered peoples) and tied to it by the duty of service. It was also the reason for the relentless fixation of the Russian peasantry: they too were to be bound to the service of the state, through taxation, military recruitment and through labour duties on a noble's estate. Serfdom, which in most of central Europe was commercial in motive, was generated in Russia by the needs of the state.

Even the church was subjected to the same imperatives. In the mid-seventeenth century, when Muscovite diplomacy and arms were beginning to achieve success in Europe, the Orthodox Church started to prepare itself for an ecumenical role in keeping with a great empire by correcting its service books and liturgical practices in accordance with what were held to be the best international examples. The state, in the person of Tsar Alexei, enforced these reforms with a ruthless violence which split the church from within, and drove many of its staunchest believers into a schismatic movement which has endured to the present day. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Peter the Great went a stage further by abolishing the Patriarchate which had been the symbol of the church's independent standing. Catherine II completed the process by expropriating the church's landholdings and rendering it financially dependent on the treasury.

Romanovia instead of Russia

The Russian Empire was not as a matter of principle a supernational or even purely dynastic one: it was called after Russia, professed the Russian faith, and bore on its banners the symbols of Russia. When in the early nineteenth century, Count Kankrin (himself Greek by nationality) proposed to end this anomaly, to remove the ethnic designation, and rename the empire Romanovia, the proposal was rejected. Konstantin Aksakov may have felt that, since the time of Peter the Great, Russia had been a nation occupied by an alien bureaucratic regime, but we cannot take so simple-minded a view. There was an imperial patriotism which was genuinely Russian.

The truth is: we should recognize that there have always been two forms of Russian national consciousness, an imperial one, which focuses on the state, and an ethnic-cultural one, with a tendency to alienation from the state. This dichotomy is confirmed by the Russian language, which has two epithets for them, respectively rossiiskoe and russkoe.

The Slavophiles were the first to try to formulate the ideas of anti-governmental Russian patriotism in a language adequate to contemporary European political and philosophical discourse. Ironically, such was the condition of Russian culture at the time that they had to borrow heavily from

Drawing by Victor Kazachek

German idealism in order to do so. Significantly, they took as their ideal the two social orders which had probably suffered most heavily from the demands of empire: the peasant community and the church, seeing in them both manifestations of a sobornost, a spirit of community, which they believed distinguished Russia advantageously from the apparently more successful social and political systems of the West.

The Slavophiles misread history: the evils they attacked began not, as they asserted, with Peter the Great, who merely radicalized existing tendencies, but with Ivan the Terrible, in fact with Muscovy's first excursion beyond the ethnic borders of Rus into rule over non-Russians, that is, into empire.

If one looks at the Soviet Union, then it is far from self-evident that it is essentially a Russian empire. The name of the state is not Russian; indeed, it bears no ethnic or geographic designation. Its emblems are explicitly internationalist and its ideology theoretically no less so. More than that, the Soviet regime has wrought such destruction upon the Russian church, Russian culture, the peasantry and the natural environment, that it seems monstrous to think of it as being in any way Russian, as Solzhenitsyn has repeatedly pointed out.

Certainly, if you ask any non-Russian, he will tell you in no uncertain terms that he has been oppressed by Russians for decades, and will unhesitatingly identify the Soviet regime as being Russian in its very essence. The core of the party-state apparat is mainly Russian (or Ukrainian, which in this case means Little Rusian): so too are the senior cadres of the armed forces and the security police. Russian has been the language of military command, and of most official transactions, as well as of ideology and of much of the education system.

The Soviet state, or rather the Communist Party, has oppressed and exploited Russian culture for the needs of empire even more ruthlessly and destructively than did the tsarist regime. Russian national consciousness has accordingly also been sharply divided into two categories, which the American scholar John Dunlop has clearly identified, and which he labels (i) National Bolshevism and (ii) 'revivalism' (vozrozhdenchestvo). The first represents the rossiiskoe, the second the russkoe.

The National Bolsheviks and the revivalists

The touchstone of their differences has been their attitude to Stalin. The National Bolsheviks revere him as the leader who brought the Russian state to its most grandiose dimensions; the revivalists execrate him as the destroyer of their church, their culture and their distinctive rural way of life. They differ also in their attitude to the Orthodox Church. The National Bolsheviks are prepared to tolerate it and to conclude, when expedient, an alliance of convenience with it for the preservation of social order. The revivalists, on the other hand, view the church as the central binding factor in Russian national identity, without which that identity has no spiritual content.

The revivalists' viewpoint has a certain internal consistency, though they underrate the extent to which Marxism took on specifically Russian features when it was imported, and to which the Soviet state has inherited Russian traditions. The National Bolsheviks' outlook, on the other hand, suffers from an irreconcilable contradiction. They respect the tsarist state, and they approve both its imperialism and its espousal of Russian nationalism; yet they also revere Communism, which began by destroying the tsarist state, combatting Russian nationalism and encouraging the separatism of the non-Russian peoples. They also have great difficulty in explaining how the Russians are oppressed and exploited. Unlike the other nations, the Russians have no "elder brother" to blame for their sufferings. The National Bolsheviks do their best to explain away these inconsistencies by invoking the myth of an international conspiracy of Zionists and Freemasons, which corrupted the Communist Party from inside, and seduced it into anti-Russian crimes such as the murder of Nicholas II, and the destruction of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour.

From the mid-sixties to the mid-eighties, National Bolsheviks and revivalists moved further and further apart. Since 1985, however, under pressure of political crisis and the greater assertiveness of the non-Russians, the revivalists have split. Some of them (Rasputin, Belov, Astafyev) have moved closer to National Bolshevism, fearing that no kind of Russian national identity can be preserved without a Russian empire. Others, like Mozhayev, Zalygin and Academician Likhachev, have distanced themselves even further from the traditional forms of the Rusian/Soviet state, and have joined the democratic camp.

Russian national values can best be preserved and extended in a Russian nation-state, such as most European nations succeeded in establishing by the nineteenth or early twentieth century. There will be enormous difficulties in creating such a political entity. The Russian Republic is itself an ethnic patchwork, and some means must be found of ensuring that the national minorities living within it are able to satisfy their aspirations no less than the Rusians themselves. Then there is the intractable problem of the millions of Russians who live outside the Russian Republic, in territories whose populations are often now quite hostile to everything that reminds them of their former masters.

But precisely for their sake it is crucial that relations between the Soviet nations remain as peaceful and mutually tolerant as possible. That is why the appropriate political outlook for Russian patriots today is liberal-democratic, and why they should be not in opposition to Rukh and Sajudis, but in alliance with them.

"I was a patient of the secret ward"

Recollections of a man who wanted to go abroad but found himself in the Institute of Forensic Psychiatry

Yuri Osmushko

I was transferred from Lubyanka prison to the Serbsky Central Scientific and Research Institute of Forensic Psychiatry. Though only 18, I had already been convicted under Article 58 (1) of the Criminal Code for an attempt to leave the Soviet Union. I did not have any firm political convictions at the time. I simply understood that our life was full of lies, hypocrisy and injustice. Before the arrest I studied at night school. I remember that we studied the Stalin Constitution, a very democratic constitution which guaranteed human rights and freedoms for everyone. But I already knew that many people had been "taken away" even from the house in which I lived. I understood that I did not want to live in this way and began to phone foreign embassies. At one embassy they refused to talk with me right away. However, I met with a staff member of another embassy and we had a talk in his car. When I got out of the car I was grabbed and taken to Lubyanka.

They placed me in solitary confinement. I did not know prison regulations well at the time. Someone told me that if an arrested person goes on hunger strike and continues it for 12 days, he will be set free. I went on hunger strike, but on the third day they began to feed me forcibly and I had to give up my struggle. However, the attempt served as the reason for sending me to the Serbsky Institute.

I was kept in a cell for several days without being summoned to interrogation. Suddenly – it was a long time before dinner – the door was opened, a warder came in and, as usual, whispered my surname, first name and patronymic. In keeping with prison regulations I replied in a whisper. I was ordered to go out with my bag and was taken to the inner prison yard. In the yard I saw a bus with blue curtains on its windows. Inside it proved to be a usual prison van with single-seat boxes.

The van drove off and soon I guessed that it passed a check point. The door was opened and the guard took me into a building resembling a hospital reception ward. A woman in a white coat began to ask me questions usually put by doctors in out-patient clinics. Asked whether I guessed where I was staying, I replied that it was most likely a hospital connected with forensic examination. The woman replied with disappointment: "No, but you will learn later." After a haircut and bath, an old woman attendant took me to a ward. It was strange to walk without a guard. The woman told me that I had been brought to the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry. She inquired why I was arrested and, on learning that I wanted to go abroad, added: "You must be a spy then." I did not agree with her.

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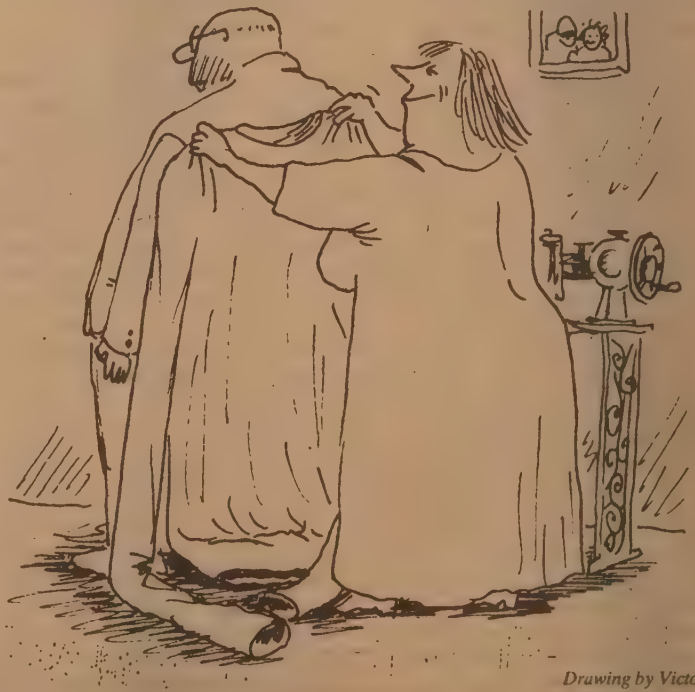
I was put under the observation of expert doctor Maria Leonidovna. In general, all inmates of the institute's fourth department were placed under the supervision of four doctors: Maria Leonidovna, head of the department, Margarita Feliksovna Sologub, Kira Lvovna, and one more woman doctor whose name and surname I do not remember. In principle the surnames of the personnel were kept secret.

Various myths circulated among inmates. Margarita Feliksovna was believed to be a daughter of Feliks Dzerzhinsky. It was said that Kaplan, who had wounded Lenin by shooting at him in 1918, worked as a librarian in the Butyrka prison until her death and the job was then taken over by her daughter.

Twenty-four prisoners were constantly held in the fourth department. It had two wards and an isolation ward. Besides this, there were two free wards in reserve, with 14 beds always prepared for new inmates. An inmate was usually kept in the institute for five weeks. The examination was concluded by a meeting of the commission with the participation of all doctors of the department and a KGB man. The meeting was usually chaired by Assistant Professor Lunts and sometimes by Professors Dubinin or Vvedensky. Lunts apparently en-



Drawing by Victor Bogorad

joyed high prestige among representatives of the repressive system, while inamtes considered him a most unscrupulous man.

Maria Leonidovna summoned me to talks, inquired about my case, inclinations and interests, and "prepared" me for the commission. After the solitary cell in the Lubyanka prison the Serbsky Institute seemed to be a health resort. Thick glass of the type used on ships was fitted into the window-frames, but there were no bars in them. Between breakfast and dinner we made small boxes and received ten cigarettes for this work. Compared with the prison, the meals were decent. On May Day and May 9 (Victory Day) we were even treated to caviar.

Some of the inmates feigned sickness in order to escape punishment under Article 58. It remained the most terrible article, though the year 1955 finally came. Having plenty of free time, I imitated some of the malingerers. After all, I never thought that I would be pronounced mentally deranged and placed in an appropriate hospital. So I wanted to see for fun what it meant to be an insane person.

Several other inmates of the department had had the same charges brought against them. We envied the soldiers who served in the German Democratic Republic and managed to run away to the West. We were glad to learn that Major Victor Kravchenko, who worked as a Soviet military attache abroad, not only gained freedom but also taught the despotic regime a lesson. He brought an action against a Soviet journalist who called him "scum." Before my arrest I read a lampoon against Kravchenko in the magazine *Krokodil*. The author, heaping abuses on the former Soviet army officer, calculated how much he gained in court under the ancient rate of exchange and concluded with malicious glee that the plaintiff did not get 30 silver coins.

Among inmates of the special department there were people arrested for their anonymous letters in which they criticized party bodies and the government. The KGB easily detected the authors of such letters.

The former servicemen taken prisoner by Germans made up the largest group of inmates. They had been sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment in special camps and 5 more years of exile for "high treason." After Stalin's death they began to write appeals, because their conviction was an obvious absurdity and a violation of international conventions on prisoners of war. Our leadership evidently found a solution by placing "traitors" in a psychiatric hospital. True, several months later they were granted amnesty.

There was also one former SS-man, a two-metre tall Byelorussian, who was transferred to the clinic from a camp. Either he feigned madness or had acoustic hallucinations, but he claimed that he always heard the clatter of a typewriter and the voice of a man dictating a death sentence to him.

An elderly frail worker, Svyatkin, got into the Serbsky Institute in a different way. He studied in a night university of Marxism-Leninism and, taking notes on works of Marx and Lenin, found some contradiction between them. Svyatkin made his discovery known at a seminar. He was indicted under Article 58 (10) on a charge of anti-Soviet agitation. There was direct evidence of the crime – an anti-Soviet document (the notes).

Svyatkin bluntly told the investigator: "It turns out that Russia has remained a prison of nations, as it was before." The investigator replied: "And so you will be committed to prison."

I guess now that the regime used the inmates of the Serbsky Institute of those years for "testing" a new means of repression against dissidents and intended to apply it on a wide scale. I heard from the personnel that it was decided to send for psychiatric examination all people prosecuted under Article 58. A professional spy, smuggled out of West Berlin, was once brought to the Institute from Lubyanka. There was evidently no point in sending him for psychiatric examination.

* * *

Finally I was summoned by the commission. The meeting was presided over by a very old and half-paralyzed man. I think it was professor Dubinin. A KGB representative was sitting by himself. I asked Dubinin to name the "examiners." He was taken aback and replied that it was a medical commission. I expressed my distrust in the commission. The professor got angry: "Do you want to be examined by Germans or Americans?" I replied that I wanted to deal with an independent commission, and not the commission which takes its cue from the KGB. The professor got angrier and said that I was a nonentity. Then he began to put questions to me. He inquired about my philosophical outlook, trying to establish whether I was an idealist or materialist. I replied that I had inadequate theoretical grounding, becauase I had only secondary education.

The next day I asked Maria Leonidovna about the results. She said that I was declared a sick man.

A week later several inmates were taken away. In another week I was again summoned before the commission. Assistant Professor Lunts presided over the meeting this time. He asked questions connected with my attempt to go abroad. I denied everything. The KGB representative, unable to contain himself, remarked: "The guilt of Osmushko has been proved by the investigation."

In a week's time I was taken to Butyrka prison and then sent for compulsory treatment to the Leningrad psychiatric prison hospital. In some cases the Leningrad doctors did not agree with the diagnosis made by the Serbsky Institute. An inmate was returned to Moscow, but the institute, trying to maintain its reputation, usually insisted on its conclusion. The chief doctor of the Leningrad psychiatric hospital liked to stress his independence of the Serbsky Institute and took special pride in the fact that his clinic worked under the guidance of the Interior Ministry, KGB, Ministry of Justice, Procurator's Office and Ministry of Public Health of the USSR.

I asked the doctor to arrange a meeting with my defence counsel but he replied that the hospital administration was both guardian and counsel.

A women's prison adjoined the hospital wards, and some patients tried to send letters to party or law-enforcement bodies through women prisoners. But the letters were returned to the hospital. They were diligently filed and repressions against their authors increased.

After another examination, which lasted for many months, I was told that the diagnosis made by the Serbsky Institute was revised, that I was of sound mind, and that my fate would be decided by court martial.

The court martial decided to release me. I was given a railway ticket and set free. The letter sent to the chief psychiatrist of Moscow asked him to give me the necessary assistance. I went through painful experiences in trying to receive a passport, domicile registration and a job.

In 1976 I was rehabilitated by the Supreme Court of the USSR in default of corpus delicti. ■

Information is the language of democracy

US colleagues suggest cooperation in widening sources of information

Robert Karl Manoff,
Director, Center for War, Peace, and the News Media

It may come as a surprise to Soviet readers, many of whom are tired of seemingly endless political debate and impatient for action, but there are Americans who now see Soviet political life as being more vigorous and vital than their own.

This view was frequently expressed during our presidential election campaign two years ago, when there was a widespread outcry – almost a popular revolt – against the superficiality of the candidates' discussion of the important issues. Journalists, who were responsible for reporting what the candidates had to say, were particularly critical, and they searched (most of the time unsuccessfully) for ways to force the politicians to confront the tough economic, social, and political problems that they seemed to prefer to ignore. In their frustration, journalists and commentators often pointed to the Soviet Union, as well as to Eastern Europe, where the problems are greater but public debate about them is also more intense.

The right to know

Many of the most interesting commentators on democratic theory in the West have now come to the conclusion that for such processes to be successful, democracies must pay careful attention to creating and protecting what these theorists have come to call the "public sphere."

What is a "public sphere"? To be honest about it, the idea is more discussed than understood, since the process of understanding democratic politics (which is a mere two centuries old) is still incomplete. But this much is known about the public sphere: it is a political "space" (mental, not physical) in which citizens have the ability and the freedom to come together to think about and discuss their common social, political, and economic affairs. This space, in turn, is created by a wide variety of institutions that make it possible for the issues important to the public to be freely discussed, and for all points of view to be completely expressed. But institutions are not enough: a real public sphere can only exist where citizens develop the habits of mind (such as tolerance for opposing views) and the social routines (such as the practice of keeping themselves informed) that make meaningful debate possible.

Drawing by Jean Oganeur

The press, of course, is one of the institutions essential for the public sphere. There is no mystery about this fact. Even crude theories of democracy include a role for the press, although this role is often just taken for granted instead of being developed in detail. In the United States, for example, journalists operate with general ideas about the "freedom of the press" and "the public's right to know" without thinking very much about the historical reasons this freedom is guaranteed in our constitution, and what **exactly** it is that the public has the right to read and to learn about. The theory of the public sphere is more sophisticated in this respect. This theory makes it clear that the press must ultimately come to terms with its responsibility for contributing to the process of creating and maintaining the social, psychological and intellectual space for meaningful public debate.

But mere "debate" for its own sake is not adequate to sustain a true public sphere. Democratic theory requires that, to be meaningful, debate must promote social self-knowledge. In other words, democracy requires not only debate but informed, detailed, and intelligent debate. Recent American political debate has often not met these criteria very well, and this is why so many Americans have been frustrate and alienated by our politics.

To meet these criteria, debate must be based on more than personal preferences and mere opinion. For debate that strengthens the public sphere must inform citizens about the world and the choices before them, not merely present the points of view of this or that politician or commentator. Opinions give the public only a choice between competing opinions. What the public really needs are the facts that enable individuals to make up their own minds by discovering the truth about the world for themselves.

Journalists investigate

From the American perspective, it seems to be that the Marxist-Leninist world view did not place a high value on facts. Although official Marxist-Leninist thought had little credibility in the USSR for years before the Communsit Party lost its monopoly on political power, many of its basic assumptions nevertheless penetrated into public life. It became an accepted assumption that points of view must – and should – have priority over mere facts.Truth was valued less than ideology.

Such views are now widely rejected, but the journalism community still places commentators at the apex of the profession, and it is the rare journalist who does not aspire to exchange his reporter's notebook for the more prestigious life of the observer or analyst. From the perspective of democratic theory, it is a very encouraging sign that many of the best journalists in the country have spent the last several years unearthing new and important facts about the country's past and present, and that the prestige of "investigative journalism" has increased in recent months. It is not too much to expect, however, that in a fully functioning public realm, much more journalism would be of the investigative type. There is nothing extraordinary about this idea: investigative journalists are simply representatives of the public who refuse to accept appearances and spend their working lives digging below the surface for facts that are not available to most others in society. In this sense, investigative journalists are society's own intelligence agency, for this reason they are essential to the public realm, and therefore to democracy.

Because democracy is so dependent upon the excellence of its journalism, the Center for War, Peace, and the News Media was founded at New York University in 1985 to help American journalists improve their reporting of US-Soviet relations, arms control, nuclear issues, and the Soviet Union itself. For the last five years the Center has worked with American journalists in the United States and the Soviet Union to provide assistance in their difficult work of reporting such issues. Beginning in 1987, the Center has held an annual meeting in Moscow for the American press corps in the city, each year bringing some of the best American experts on Soviet affairs to discuss their views with the American correspondents reporting from the USSR. The Center has also provided the journalists with its own dossiers, containing collections of the best articles written on Soviet developments (for example, on economics, the nationalities question, foreign policy), and has offered to help any correspondent in Moscow in finding other articles from books and journals in the United States. The Center's programs have all been motivated by the conviction that debates on US-Soviet relations in the United States are dependent upon the best possible reporting of the USSR in the American news media.

Get the facts

Over the years, Soviet journalists, too, became interested in the Center's programs, and began asking what the Center could do to provide the Soviet press corps with the kind of assistance we were already providing to American reporters. Discussions made it clear that, on the whole, Soviet journalists had much less access to the vast information which American journalists work with every day in the United States, and it became clear that the Center could be of help by increasing the availability of facts – information – to all members of the Soviet press corps who needed them.

The result is the Moscow Center for Democratic Journalism, a new facility that will open early in 1991 in the centre of the city. It is being planned to provide many information services to the Soviet press corps (as well as to the foreign press in the city) that are now almost totally unavailable to most journalists at even the biggest news organizations. The Center is now negotiating with a number of Moscow organizations to find the right partner for this program, and to locate the right office space for the project. Specifically, the Moscow Center for Democratic Journalism will provide all members of the Soviet press corps with the following services:

– on-line computer data bases. Satellite links to the United States will make it possible for Soviet journalists to use computers to access the thousands of American and international newspapers, journals and other information sources that are now computerized in the West. This information can be searched in almost any way the journalists need. The Center will also be able to locate specific articles in the United States and send them back electronically to Moscow almost overnight. In addition, the Center will offer courses to journalists and journalism students in the use of these computer services;

– a library of American and international books and periodicals. Many publishers have already agreed to supply their publications even before they are printed in the West, to make sure that the most up-to-date information possible on many different subjects is available in Moscow;

– a briefing program. Many Western experts are now passing through Moscow but most reporters never hear about them or know what their areas of expertise are. The Center will select the best of them and provide regular breakfast briefings for the press. These will be the only regular series of briefings offered by non-governmental organizations (Soviet or American) in the USSR;

– a weekly bulletin. Because too many Western experts are available to be able to include them all in the briefing program, the Center has arranged with American economic, political and academic organizations to supply lists of the visiting experts, their areas of expertise, and their hotels, so that Soviet journalists may contact them individually to conduct interviews and discuss current developments;

– fellowship programs. The Center for War, Peace, and the News Media already administers the Alerdinck Fellowship Program in the United States, which has brought Soviet journalists to the US to work with American newspapers and television stations for six weeks, and Americans to the Soviet Union to do the same. These programs will be expanded and located in the Moscow Center, where all Soviet journalists can have access to them.

As the Moscow Center develops, many other programs no doubt will be created in conjunction with the advisory board of Soviet journalists with which the Center hopes to work closely. The only limit to this project is the imagination of the participants and the generosity of sponsoring organizations who are committed to the values of democratic journalism.

It is perhaps unusual that an American organization should be initiating this effort, but we are doing it in the same spirit of service with which we have been working with the American press corps for years. Our interest derives from our commitment to democratic values, and from our conviction that democracy ultimately cannot flourish anywhere in the world if it does not exist everywhere in the world. In this sense, the future of the Soviet and the American systems are linked, and it is a tie that we hope to strengthen through this project. Information is the common language that all democracies speak. ■

The finishing point

Peter Weiss was sure he would never let himself be made into a butcher and sadist. Will his readers feel the same way?

Peter Weiss. Self-portrait

Hours spent in a courtroom do not impart optimism. Even when one is there purely as onlooker. Even when one is sure that justice is being done. Even when all around think the past will never return.

Peter Weiss sat through the entire trial of the Oswiecim guards held some 25 years ago in Frankfort on the Main. Luckily, the writer lived during the years of the Third Reich in emigration. Perhaps only during the trial did he realize what had taken place in Germany. The accused did not plead guilty. They said they had done their duty, had obeyed orders, thus challenging all those daring to judge them. Would you conduct yourselves differently in a similar situation, they intimated.

Teenagers usually complain that they were been born too late, were deprived of the opportunity to be involved in the heroic and beautiful. Several years ago Chancellor Helmut Kohl circulated a reverse formula: "The mercy of late birth." He was speaking in Jerusalem, and his audience well realized what this tall German meant. That was that had our generation been born as early as those who triggered off the Second World War and built Oswiecim, perhaps we too would have turned into criminals.

A dubious admission, that one did not commit a crime only because the occasion was not opportune. However, Helmut Kohl had weighty arguments in his favour. Millions in Germany had been decent citizens, but in the Third Reich were involved in the greatest of atrocities ever perpetrated in history.

There are really not so very many natural, born criminals. Is it circumstances that are responsible for the fall of others? Post-war German writing seeks to fathom why in certain circumstances decent people commit evil. Put to the test most Germans are extremely deterministic. The wide assortment of answers, ranging from "I knew nothing about the concentration camps" to "I had to obey orders" concealed a firm conviction that the blame for everything should be laid on times themselves when they could not have acted otherwise.

Peter Weiss was sure he would not have succumbed to circumstances, that he would not have let himself be made a butcher and a sadist. Luckily he had no chance to put his convictions to the test. Hence, he addressed himself to history. After all, there were people who resisted circumstances and preserved their honour. He found them in the Resistance Movement. He was more interested in Germans, not because he sought to justify the German nation, but because he wanted to analyze the thorniest example.

For us members of the Resistance Movement are heroes, who fought the absolute evil that fascism personified. In Nazi Germany though they were regarded as traitors, who in collaboration with the enemies fought against their own country.

Before his death nine years ago, Peter Weiss devoted the evening of his life to a stupendous three-volume saga *The Aesthetics of Resistance*. In this country the book stood no chance of translation as it intruded into the forbidden zone of the Moscow trials, Trotsky, freedom of speech and censorship. Again it would be almost hopeless to publish it today, but now for a different reason. Who would bother to read it?

After all, it consists of nearly one thousand pages of text devoid of paragraphs and headings. What is this – an essay, a historical outline, an art study? The writer is familiar with all three. In his first novelettes and plays, he fearlessly experimented with text revealing simultaneously the ability to produce intellectual prose and sparkling farce. He easily introduces the documents into the fabric, trying thereby to modernize literature's classical vocabulary. He also analyzed painting, himself excelling in that field, exhibiting his works in Sweden where he settled before the war.

Nevertheless, Weiss terms his work a novel. Since Gogol an author has been allowed to avoid canon when defining his genre. Peter Weiss sincerely held that he could painlessly integrate history and politics in the epic of the novel. His purpose was to recount the history of the left-wing movement in Europe from 1917 through 1945.

Who is still interested in all that?

Weiss's personages, Communists, underground Resistance fighters, International Brigade members, crave genuine Marxism, purified of blunder and crime. They put the bill to the Party: "The horror is that the Party, whose objective was to work for culture's deliverance, destroyed its thinker-creators, retaining only stereotypes." And they demanded its rebirth.

But is there a party capable of doing that?

Only yesterday Party history encapsulated all spiritual and intellectual discussion. The reintroduction in the annals of revolutionaries once viewed as revisionists, opportunists, conciliators and social traitors, appeared to be a grand achievement. However, the newly recreated pantheon of veterans is already submerged by another wave of destruction with socialist ideas now completely negated. Who today would take pains in the wake of Weiss to recall the class struggles of Weimar Republic or detail the history of the working-class movement in Sweden?

Peter Weiss was welcomed in East Ber-

lin and Moscow. His plays were translated and produced, and he was praised for "associating himself with the advanced ideas of the epoch." In *Neues Deutschland*, the central newspaper of the no longer existing SUPG, Weiss wrote: "Of the two choices remaining to me today, I see only the socialist system as offering the possibility of removing the injustice that exists in the world. I myself grew up in bourgeois society and in my work and private life spent a lot of my time seeking to rid myself of narrow-mindedness, bias and egoism which this environment imposes." However, Peter Weiss often disappointed admirers, now questioning the likelihood of building a fair society on the basis of Marxist theory, now writing the play *Trotsky in Exile* which "falcifies the history of the October Revolution and the Soviet state."

For East Berlin and Moscow Peter Weiss, a member of the Swedish Communist Party, should have been "one of theirs," but for some reason he did not become that. Left-wing European intellectuals turned away from the socialist camp, but Weiss regarded socialism as a positive alternative to his environment, sought to demonstrate that in his writings, however arousing but an acid response in the Eastern bloc. Moscow and East Berlin were not happy with his plastic skill and intellectual brilliance, preferring simple reliable proletarian authors.

When sitting out the aforementioned trial in Frankfort, Peter Weiss sought to fathom what motivated willing cooperation with the regime. Writing his novel, he gave thought to the few who resisted the regime. Most were Communists. They were odd Communists, however. They drew strength for the struggle not from the *Short Course of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)* and the speeches of the leaders, but from an effort to assimilate the riches of world culture and art. In the novel Willi Münzenberg, a real person of Germany's prewar Communist Party, whom his Communist comrades killed, says: "Art represents a means capable of dislocating the conservatism of political institutions." According to Weiss, assimilation of art represents the one and only firm ground in the fluidity of the Communist movement, keynoted as it is by confusion, suspiciousness, low cultural levels, a lack of unity, inner decay and the terror bedevilling the Communist comrades.

Weiss hid nothing when reproducing the tragic saga of Europe's left-wing, Communist movement in the middle of the twentieth century. No judge, he does not seek to draft an indictment. What he feels are pain and shame. He regrets the lot that overtook the bright and wonderful idea of socialism. The *Aesthetic of Resistance* serves as an epitaph to the Communist movement, one penned by a comrade.

What of the Resistance Movement then? Does not the squaring of accounts with totalitarian Communism expunge this movement too? If Stalin was a criminal like Hitler, if Stalin's Bolshevism was a version of national socialism, if some now call the war a bloodbath, which but one Führer and but one "father of the peoples" provoked why then laud the members of the German underground movement?

The sins of the Communists of the postwar generation rest on the members of the Communist underground. New East European leaders do not want the memorials to the members of Resistance Movements to render homage to Communists who fought against Hitler.

Dangers beset the members of the Resistance Movement from every quarter. They were trapped by the secret police and could not reveal themselves to their closest friends and family, afraid of being accused of treachery. However, now it turns out that they were helping the wrong side.

Stalin was not their best ally in the struggle against Hitler. But there was none other. It is worthwhile reading what Peter Weiss has written to comprehend the moral imperative of the members of the Resistance Movement. In his novel there are hardly any Nazis at all except for purely episodical personages. He has no need to tell about Nazism because decent people know why they have to fight it. The question lies elsewhere. Is it patriotic to resort to help from outside? The generals who sought to assassinate Hitler on July 20, 1944, cannot be reproached, as they did not cooperate with foreign secret services and did not wish for Stalin and Roosevelt to win. What about the others?

In the summer of 1943 British bombers almost completely destroyed Hamburg in three days of raids. The British are blamed for bombing so densely populated a city, where mostly civilians perished. Listen now to what a German not involved in the Resistance Movement, but who considered Hitler a criminal, thought:

"During those three days of raids, I stood on the roof of my cottage on the outskirts of Hamburg. British bombers flew by overhead. 'At last!' I shouted again and again. The Allies had procrastinated and Hitler had been winning non-stop in his quest for world supremacy. Millions of dead bodies lay along the roads and streets through which he triumphantly marched. At last they have come, the British! Later after the air alert was over, I walked through the destroyed streets with their half-charred corpses. What did I feel? Horror and compassion, of course. But I also thought that you, the dead, wanted that and had thus brought death to our children and those who did not want that. Whom did I fear for during the raids? For the airmen whom the other Germans cursed. They were bold men and did what I had expected of them and had hoped for. I always loved my country, but then I had to wish its loveliest city doom."

Was this man less of a German patriot than the German anti-aircraft gunner who, after all the other guns had been smashed by direct hits, continued to fire at the planes of the British Royal Air Force that were burning his city?

This moral trap is all the more perilous if we insert Stalin into the equation instead of the Allies. By assisting Stalin, the members of the underground movement brought Hitler's collapse nearer but at the same time, paved the way for a new, 40 year-long dictatorship for their compatriots in the Eastern zone, one that was overthrown by popular revolt only in the autumn of 1989. So what follows from this? That there was no point fighting Hitler in order to leap from the frying pan into the fire?

We shall look for the answer to Peter Weiss, whose book should soon come out in Russian translation. In it many pages are devoted to the Red Capelle, the underground group that relayed to Soviet intelligence top confidential data as to the Wehrmacht's war plans and Germany's economic potential. We see its members in the Gestapo jail and at their execution in Plötzensee. We spend several minutes with these "traitors and spies" before their execution. They are aware of their duty, which is that it behooves every decent person to struggle against a tyrant at home. Eventually their struggle resulted in Germany's deliverance.

In evil times it is hard and frightening for anyone to decide whether to succumb or fight back. Weiss gives us not a historical outline, but a novel. He is concerned with eternal truths, with lessons for all time. They include the moral imperative of the Resistance Movements, which is to fight all dictatorships, all criminal regimes.

Can one hide from that struggle? Can one, while not cooperating with the regime, yet not fight it? Escape to some faraway village or to an ivory tower?

The finishing point is that same forked road, with that same alternative. To succumb? Or to fight back?

Leonid Mlechin

The next morning

Though friends leave nothing seems to change. Only windows grow dark and telephones do not answer

The moon paled and the skies grew grey. As daybreak dawned, a ray of sunshine penetrated my kitchen lighting up the damp patches on the ceiling and gliding down the peeling walls. The egg-shell slabbing is gradually disintegrating.

Meanwhile my little world of home awakens: cat and dog fuss around the fridge, the life rumbles by as tenants set out their diverse ways. I too need to go.

Scattered on the table are the snapshots left after Julia went. There is one of our entire form of 40, each cheat bearing a little star dipicting a curly-headed boy. The uninitiated who know nothing of the mysteries of our rituals will scarcely identify the boy. Only four of that 1–B form are left. Now Julia has gone...

She dropped in to say good-bye. She was brimming with plans. She saw the future in rosy colours and already knew what she was going to do and how much she was going to earn. The figures were astronomical.

She made all prior arrangements. Ahead went the youngest, the healthiest, the energetic, taking with them the scientific projects she and her husband had evolved. Over there, in the States, interest was shown. Everything seemed fine. She even knew the school the children would attend. But...

Suddenly she felt silent. Then she asked:

"You're staying on? Still have faith? In whom?"

What could I say? Glasnost? Plurality? Democracy? What did that all amount to? What price democracy if ... But what's come over me? It's time for me to go. There are chores to do. Today they consume so much energy and time. Julia has gone. We always used to go together, that was much nicer.

At the dry cleaner's I found that the self-service section had long ceased to operate, which meant I had to queue for long to hand in my garments. The receptionist explains:

"What, we do a bad job? That's because we haven't got the necessary stuff. Saving on hard currency they are. Better hold on to your things if you don't want them snatched right off the counter."

She's amazingly polite. Naturally it's still morning and she hasn't bristled yet.

Leaving the dry cleaner's I set off to the post office. Magazines aren't being delivered. The plump mail carrier lady complains that because of the heavy load she had to carry, she has some internal trouble. They don't provide trolley or car and won't raise pay. She doesn't know why magazines aren't being delivered. True, her ignorance does not upset me very much. Nowadays I find it hard to read newspapers and magazines – no strength left.

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Who are we here? Why are we here? Why did Mother Nature spit us out into the world?

"Think me a rat? Escaping from a sinking ship?" Julia inquired of me, perturbed. "I really don't want to leave, but just can't afford to stay on. I've got children, and I don't want them to become rabbits for experiment. Nor do I want to go on building anything anymore. We've only one life and I want to live it."

Julia has that right. Paid for by the live of several generations of her family. Her grandfather returned from emigration to "build." And he did, from 1937 to 1953 at a lumber camp. In 1957 he died. Grand-

mother also "built" from 1937 solely for being grandfather's wife. She died last summer. She cracked her hip, what unfortunately overtakes the elderly, their bones being so fragile. The hospital refused to take her, not to downgrade statistics. For two whole months she cried and cried endlessly. The neighbours even called out the police, thinking somebody was being tortured. The doctor could not prescribe any powerful sedative as with that diagnosis narcotics are not allowed. Yet one cannot get them for love or money without a prescription. She couldn't eat because of the pain. In brief periods of respite,she shouted that grandchildren and great-grandchildren should go, as this was a horrible place where one not only could not live, but even die decently.

"Humane socialism has still not dawned here," Julia assured me. "Sure you will live to see it? What price will everyone pay for a share of socialist humanitarianism? Look at yourself. Know what you look like? And did you see Alyosha and Tania? My kids are blue! One has gastritis, the other colitis. Even though hunger is still not here yet."

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Obsessed with such sad thoughts I resume my "chores" route. On my way from the post office I encounter a tobacconist's. Julia left her coupons with me, a really royal gift. They have Belomor cigarettes for sale. Should I buy them, I wonder? True I don't seem to need them. But I'll make a gift of them. Accross the street I make out the red brick building of the school. At its entrance senior formers puff away behind the garbage bin.

"Mum, what does Jew mean?" Julia's son asked her back home the first time from this school. A few days later he complained that nobody wanted to sit with him in class.

"What can you expect with a family name like that?" Alyosha's first school mistress explained to his parents.

"We bottled up our fealings," Julia said. "Here they notice nationalism whether at the every-day level or on the universal scale, only when democrats are to be accused of something."

I remember that *Vremya* evening TV newscast which showed President Mitterrand at the head of a demonstration with anti-nationalist slogans. Jewish graves had been desecrated in France. The same newscast also reported President Bush as having sharply condemned anti-Arab sentiments in America, when the windows of several Arab-owned shops and cafés were shattered. With us national feelings are infringed the moment one is issued with an internal passport bearing the hammer and sickle emblem, as one must indicate one's nationality. Many concealed their true origins. It even netted some money to the girl clerks issuing these identity cards. But times are changing. So are values. But those girl clerks still get their money, asked now to do the exact opposite.

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"Enough. I simply don't want my children to grow up feeling inferior. Why should they be ashamed of their great-grandfather whose family name they bear? The Bolsheviks shot him for being an educated, wealthy intellectual, and wasted his money to no purpose."

The wind of Bolshevism still blows in this country of ours. It blows out purse and savings, irrespective of their owners' nationality. Julia is right.

I pass the school and automatically turn into the chemist's. Nowadays we snap up everything, including medicine, not because we need it, but because it won't be available when we'll need it. At the half empty counter carrying the inscription "Disinfectants" I see a young mother with a child. Snatching a moment when the crowd had dispersed elsewhere, she whispered something to the pharmacist. Involuntarily I heard: "Pediculez..."

Which means lice. Poor girl. Her child is one more victim of the "sanitary cleanliness" of child institutions. She is turned away.

"You know what," Julia angrily observed, "you can have a minimum degree of personal independence and a necessary one. For me that is the right to personal cleanliness. In that brief period at school Alyosha had lice, and Tania also caught it from him. It took us long to get rid of them. First we thought it was because of the rotten water, but then the doctor said vitamin deficiency was responsible. The things we dosed them with! Eventually somebody brought a Soviet-made "Bim" shampoo for cats and dogs that does away with lice, flees, ticks, and also transforms hair and skin into Heaven knows what. Eventually we shaved their heads."

Julia can still get heated up. After all you can catch cockroaches, bedbugs, and sundry other insects at hospitals, hotels, trains, wherever you please. Only the other day a rat cooly ran across my feet in the foodstore.

"Call me a rat?" I recall.

No, I won't say that. We are not pampered and spoilt here, in this Land of Soviets. We don't really need so much. Just the minumum of independence and personal freedom. Julia also wanted to live here the kind of life she thought necessary. However, independence is unthinkable from the angle of our socialist mentality. She and her husband founded a cooperative. They built a house in the country and started a livestock farm. But the cooperative was dispersed, because of "sabotage." Yes, they've revived the term.

Sabotage really occurs here. In fact, it's total sabotage. However it's sought in the wrong place. It's to be found in every single Soviet citizen, because we all bristle up against everything the authorities say, every initiative they take. People try not to transgress laws, but to avoid situations in which these laws are necessarily applied.

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Do I really still have faith? In what though? Now that nearly six years have passed since Chernobyl, since the numerous acheivements of glasnost reporting the miseries of sickchildren begging for money to pay for their own treatment there is a new turn in the coverage of the consequences of the tragedy: are these irradiated lands really that bad?

Could I be laying on the colours too thick? There I sense the choking stink of a burning winding of something else. The wind is again blowing our way, the stench is oppressive, causing eyes to water, provoking a feeling of nausea and an odd worry. A doctor friend tells me these are symptoms of poisoning.

"What are you waiting for? the next "wave?" Julia asked.

Indeed, what am I waiting for? Failing to discover a sensibled answer I continue my usual trot around the stores. In the third shop I get bread, in the fifth, battle for a chunk of sausage. None too overburdened, I return home, wondering whether I could battle for bread, should hunger come. After all I did see a fracas over eggs.

What am I to feed the pets with? Some problem that. It's not so bad for the dog, but as for the cat I can't pull the wool down over its eyes. I can't get it to find that hard won chunk of sausage is really edible. It won't eat it, that's final.

The day has gone by. It's really already yesterday?

Sasha is to arrive shortly. Also to say good-bye. With his wife and daughter he lives in Minsk. The little girl's blood is none too good, but not critical as yet.

I don't seem to have the grit to stomach all these farewells and good-byes. So many friends have left. Nothing seems to change though. Simply windows grow dark and telephones do not answer. As if these people never existed. Only a chance letter once in a blue moon.

Yaroslava Rakhmanova

FROM THE XXth CENTURY POLITICAL THOUGHT

Introduced by *New Times* analyst **Rostislav Zolotaryov**

This article by the prominent Russian lawyer Iosif Pokrovsky again takes us back to the trend of Russian political thought which upheld the idea of the rule of law. Taking up this noble cause for years – before the "epoch of historical materialism" – this trend often found itself caught in the grip of the regime's bureaucracy, on the one hand, and the nihilism of the radicals, socialists and anarchists, on the other. These two forces, Right and Left, especially in their extremities, almost supported one another: outbursts of radicalism caused the authorities to take harsh measures, and the escalation of the conflict merely served to send political tensions further up and to block the impulse to liberation lent to Russian society by Alexander II's reforms. The democratization and liberalization of society was restrained by the revolutionism of one camp and the conservatism of the other. Nevertheless, the progress went on, the country's economic policies kept growing, social strata and groups kept developing, the social infrastructure was taking shape, the legal and political systems of the society were improving despite all the zigzags, and the "cultured layer" was broadening. The fact that at the turn of the 20th century and in the period of 1900–1917 Russia gave the world a host of remarkable thinkers, politicians, scientists in the spheres of sociology, the law and philosophy speaks for itself. However, World War II, a crisis and the socio-political upheavals of the year 1917 led the country's social progress astray. Reactionary forces prevailed in the Russian revolution of 1861–1917, and remained in control for quite some time...

In the article which follows and which first appeared in the anthology entitled *From the Depths* (1918), Iosif Pokrovsky took up a torch from Bogdan Kistyakovsky who had written on the same subject a decade earlier in *Vekhi* (Landmarks) (see *New Times*, No.20/90). Notably, the anthology *From the Depths* carries on the tradition of *Vekhi* steeping it, so to say, in the experience of the catastrophe the country had gone through. Most of its contributors had written for *Vekhi* and for an earlier publication, *Problems of Idealism* (1902); their articles were, indeed, major landmarks in the progress of Russian political and philosophical thought.

Professor Pokrovsky has, unfortunately, sunk into oblivion, underservingly so. He passed away prematurely (incidentally, in the year of Kistyakovsky's death), at his prime. The obituary for Pokrovsky, published in the *Deeds and Days* almanach, refers to him as a man and a thinker who had taken his country's tragedies and ills close to heart. This told on the thinker's own fate. He died of a heart attack amidst famine, repressions and economic ruin caused by a turmoil of passions. In the article, which follows, one of his last, Professor Pokrovsky dwells on the subject of economic dislocation which, as one of Bulgakov's character put it, begins in the brain.

Like the other contributors to *Vekhi*, Pokrovsky levels devastating criticism against the "intelligentsia" putting it in inverted commas because he means not only (and not so much) a social group, but a certain section of it infected with destructive ideas which Merezhkovsky had described as "intellectual arrogance" unrestricted by either moral, or legal precepts. It is the intelligentsia, he implies, that has to propagate the sense of social responsibility which the blindly rebellious mob and its leaders with their hemmed-in "revolutionary vision" lack.

Perun's curse

Iosif Pokrovsky (1868–1920)

An old Novgorod legend has it that in the reign of St. Vladimir, after the people of Novgorod had dumped an idol of Perun into the Volkhov River, the angry deity threw his stick onto a bridge, saying: "Have this for a keepsake, ye people of Novgorod!" Since then, Novgorod citizens have been regularly getting together on the Volkhov bridge in violent stick fights.

That was how the toppled Perun avenged himself on the people of Novgorod: having renounced him, they came to be ruled by the big stick.

Was Perun's revenge confined to the people of Novgorod alone? Unfortunately, it wasn't; now we know that the whole of the Russian nation and its entire history so far have been under a curse. We know that our early "veche" democracy of the cudgel was followed by an autocracy of the "big stick" – be it Ivan the Terrible's sceptre, Peter the Great's bludgeon or Nicholas the First's rods. The "liberation" which came recently ended with the "dictatorship of the proletariat" – a relapse into good old Russian "democracy," only this time on a national scale. There is a difference, though: the primitive archaic cudgels have been replaced by canons and machine guns, and instead of the small Volkhov bridge we are now fighting each other on huge domestic fronts...

Perun's stick is very much still in existence. Violent mutual assault and battery is our modus vivendi and seems to be the only way we know of exercising our national "self-determination".

In general, the transition from a monarchy to a republic is a critical and dangerous process. The authority of the monarchy and the monarch always rests on rather irrational grounds. A monarch's rule is popularly regarded as a super-reasonable sanction with the result that this rule is obeyed more readily, especially where it has age-old tradition behind it. As for democratically elected authorities, their rule is totally devoid of such an irrational prop; it acts exclusively out of rational motives and appeals to the public awareness of the need for order and for a government in general; these rational motives far from always equal the previous ones in impact, and it is small wonder therefore that, according to sociologists, the democratization of a state detracts, more often than not, from the awe which the authorities and laws used to inspire in the ordinary people. After all, any democratic and parliamentary regime is nothing but domination of critical spirit; this is its greatest asset, and its worst defect at the same time.

It is perfectly clear, in the light of the above, that our Russian revolutionary transition from a monarchy to people's rule involved extraordinary dangers. The whole question was whether our people would be able to change over in no time, in an extremely difficult situation, from the irrational to the rational in matters of discipline and law-abidance, whether they work up to their genuine national interests and maintained due order in their ranks. We know that history has not been good to our people in this respect, that it has not prepared them for such a changeover; our

popular masses' ignorance and political backwardness were common knowledge. The nation's healthy instinct, and a clever guidance of the nation by the intelligentsia were our only hopes.

The Russian intelligentsia has long been noted for its being all but indifferent to legal issues. True, the situation seems to have improved somewhat of late, but the fact remains that most Russian intellectuals know little, and care less, about the law...

The intellectuals who hold idealistic views seek the absolute truth in religion, some even fanatically so. When it comes to practical social work, they prove helpless and sometimes even indifferent, I must say. As they seek the absolute truth, they pay no attention at all to the world of relative values we live in; pursuing absolute good, it loses sight of the real road which we all have to proceed along as a matter of necessity. As if blinded by our internal vision, we push our way through, ruthlessly crushing many of the values which we ourselves should very much like to uphold. We choke our "neighbour" for the sake of a "remote stranger", and we commit no end of violence for the sake of freedom. Lost in our daydreams about a paradise on Earth, we are utterly incapable of getting down to this earth and making life worth living on it. While dreaming about the absolute truth, we live amidst horrible untruths; while dreaming about celestial purity we are up to our ears in a filthy moral quagmire. For this very reason we look down our noses upon the law. We live in a land of high ethics, and in the world of the absolte, and we care nothing about that highly relative and imperfect sphere of human relations – the law...

The autorities which profess the materialistic interpretation of history only bow before force and do not take the law seriously

The intellectuals who adhere to materialistic views do not set much store by the law, either. The way they see it, the history of mankind is propelled not by ideas about the truth and justice but by purely material forces – the interests of social groups and classes; law really sanctions the actual correlation of forces resulting from the struggle between these interests.

Indeed, if the extent to which the class interests of the proletariat or the peasantry are furthered is the basic criterion of policy, then, from this standpoint, any legal norms or guarantee may prove downright harmful under definite circumstances. This is precisely the case in a situation where such guarantees (for isntance, the guarantees of justice being done, of no capital punishment being adminsitered, etc.) restrain the actions of the proletariat, the peasants or those they have installed in power. In this situation, such legal norms and guarantees are undesirable, harmful and onerous. The laws become a barrier behind which one can hide when on the defensive but which get in the way when one feels strong enough to take the offensive. Therefore, all the talk about the law by representatives of that camp is always insincere: they pay loud lip service for it when they lose, but forget all about it the moment they win. What they really recognize and what they really bow before is force and force alone: you are stronger, consequently you are right. The record of the Russian revolution with its "dictatorship," "revolutionary sense of justice," "grass-roots legislative endeavour" and the like bear this out most graphically and convincingly.

We know that in the early stages of the revolution quite a few people warned against mishandling the law, called upon the people to maintain discipline, legality and order, but their voices were promptly "shouted down" by revolutionary extremists whose indifference to the law amounted to a downright negation of it.

However, reality surpassed the worst expectations. The "materialistic" interpretation of history" turned out to be a crudely materialistic interpretation of life. All the supreme manifestations of the human spirit – conscience, honour, the craving for the truth, etc. – have been superseded by the most elementary bodily wants. "Theoretical economics" has turned out to be, in practice, a nightmarish orgy of unrestrained bestial instincts, murders, abuses and robberies. Disregard for "ideological superstructures" has grown into monstrous hostility to all that bears the stamp of intellectual refinement and culture.

Class egoism has wiped out completely the notion of the state and of the nation as a whole. The "proletariat" as a special class – the bounds of which, incidentally, have never been clearly delimited – has singled itself out and taken an intolerantly warlike stand as regards the rest of the people. The class struggle has developed into bitter violence to the hateful "rest". There is no such thing as a nation, there are only us; the "proletarians;" all the others should either cease to exist completely, or show implicit obedience to us. This is how the now notorious "dictatorship of the proletariat" has taken shape: malice and hate constitute its soul; destruction is its element; and universal slavery is its result...

After this spirit of unrestrained class egoism, invoked by ubiquitous socialist preachers, had started bearing its monstrouss fruit, some of the socalist intellectals themselves were taken aback; they appealed to the people's patriotic feelings, called upon them to maintain order and work discipline. But the people no longer heeded them, all the more so because the other part of the same socialist camp carried on its black propaganda. As it excited the masses and, for its part, became excited by them, it worked itself into a hysterical misanthropic frenzy. In some lucid intervals it could have occured to individual leaders of Bolshevism to stop and start doing some sort of positive work (in such moments we even hear them call upon the proletariat to work and to maintain discipline); on this path of constructive effort they have been fatally doomed to failure, however.

This is still going on.

This is what the "enlightenment" by our socialist intelligentsia has led to! Instead of seeing its people through the temptations and dangers of this great historical moment, this intelligentsia pushed it into the abyss and betrayed it to its enemies; obliged to help the people in its creative effort to build up a new free society, it has unleashed, instead, a nationwide civil war and anarchy. Like a compulsive gambler, it staked blindly on an unheard-of social system and lost the gift of freedom the people were already in possession of. Instead of the emancipated genius in all its noble grandeur, our socialist intelligentsia has brought to the fore the rebellious slave, and disgraced the Russian people for ages to come by presenting it to the world as a drunken Caliban.

This is a mortal sin which will be hard to expiate... I shall not dwell now on the need for absolute honesty and sincerety in preaching one's ideas; but even if this condition is observed, we should bear in mind that an idea communicated to the masses quite often has an entirely different effect on them than the objective content of this idea suggests. Any personal communication is a two-way process, the nature of which depends on the properties and specifics of the either side's psyche, and if we want to get our idea across we should take the receiving end's psyche into consideration. Otherwise, most lamentable collateral psychological reflexes and horrible distortions might occur – such notions as democracy, socialism, the bourgeoisie, etc., are cases in point. We must bear

in mind, in general, that the collective mentality is something extremely complicated and full of irrational and unpredictable phenomena: at times it is easy to agitate it, but the resulting storm is difficult to quell.

Our intelligentsia should sort out its ideological outfit honestly and thoroughly, in the first place. Admittedly, it has proved unequal – professionally even – to the acid test of the times. It has turned out to know little – if anything – about matters it tackled so boldly. Before one sets out to teach others, one should learn. And another thing our intelligentsia is well advised to do is to change its attitude towards the law.

In particular, the materialistic wing of our intelligentsia should think about the following. From the standpoint of ethics, by asserting that the proletariat and the peasantry can by right further their class interests on the grounds that these interests are their own, you put the interests of social groups which are poles apart on the same plane. Ethically, this formula makes capitalists' and big landowners' interests as legitimate as those of the workers: in both cases we have classes, and if one class can by right look after its interests, so does another. However, you do not see any supreme ethical principles which take precedence over class interests and classes and, therefore, rely solely on force for the resolution of conflicts between them. Under the circumstances, your opponent has no option but to resort to force, too. In other words, you justify the struggle against yourself by your own teaching, you infuse moral energy into your opponent and give him the sense of the righteousness of his cause.

Socialists have stirred up dark instincts in the people, and think of the law only as a means of suppression

In actuality, you do not accept, of course, such an ethical equality of the capitalist and the landowner: you believe the demands made by the worker or the peasant class more correct and worthier of recognition and approval. Why? Whatever ground you may offer for that you must admit, all the same, that by giving these grounds you leave your stark theory of class interests intact and mentally subject the struggle to uphold them to a certain supreme ethical appraisal. You involuntarily visualize, above the conflicting interests, some higher supra-class instance which approves one thing and rejects another irrespective of which of them emerges victorious from the actual struggle. While sorting out the grievances of the opponents, you unwittingly justify some of them and dismiss others.

In this way you manipulate, against your will, with notions of "right" and "wrong". It cannot be otherwise, of course. You do not even regard all of your interests as legitimate and worthy of upholding: you certainly dismiss some of them as unseemly for this or that reason. But isn't the same true of the interests of whole social groups or classes? After all, the latter may also have interests which cannot very well be furthered – such, for instance, as the interest in holding a privileged, exploiting position as regards other groups. Whereas until now this has been true of the capitalist or landowner classes, in the future similar exploiting encroachments may emerge in the class of industrial workers as regards peasants, in the class of skilled workers as regards unskilled workers, and vice versa. For as long as humankind remains imperfect, any conflicts on this issue are inevitable, and therefore we should always remember the well known rule which applies to whole groups, classes and societies: being interested in something does not mean being entitled to it. Consequently, the criterion of the law takes precedence over the criterion of personal or class interest and constitutes a notion without which we can neither think, nor act...

Discontent with the existing legal system does not justify disregard for the law in general: if the current notions of what is right and what is wrong are erroneous, this makes it all the more necessary to rectify them. Whatever our vision of the future and of the most desirable system is, it should be righteous and fair, in the first place; failing that, it will be taken by all – even by those who stand to gain from it – as stark violence. If labour differentiation does not disappear, society will remain divided into groups each having special interests, and if we do not want these groups to be permanently at war with one another, we ought to adjust their cooperation on certain fair legal principles...

The law makes for outer and conventional order, of course, but this does not mean that the human community can do without it...

People have to live together, after all, and this takes the establishment of a conventional order of human interrelationships under which every individual would be guaranteed equal opportunities for his or her physical and spiritual fulfilment and for moral improvement.

Any community means, by definition, cooperation, and any form of cooperation presupposes a certain orderly application of forces and organization. Even if all the members of any close-knit society love each other and are prepared to help each other in every way, they need an orderly organization of labour if they are carrying out a common project – otherwise the selfless by non-coordinated efforts of all will be wasted... The law provides the essential organizational framework for that; as such, it will never lose its value for any human community...

In the light of the above, our idealists are bound, on reflection, to arrive at the conclusion that negation of, or disregard for, the law by no means ensues from the essence of their idealistic world outlook; contrarywise, it is explained by their own inadequate attention to certain aspects of the latter. As soon as this error is made right, they will see for themselves how much their idealism can contribute towards an efficient legal system.

As all know, legal and state organization is created by a joint mental effort of the people. There are nations to which a sensible self-organization comes easy – it seems to be in their blood; but there are also people who arrive at such an organization the hard way... To think how many shameful pages we have inscribed in our history owing to our failure to reach reasonable compromises on the home front, to our fatal proneness to "partisanship"! At present, we are, perhaps, inscribing the most shameful page of all...

We are now looking around longingly for a saviour. A voice is telling us: he is right there, amid the Russian people which is now so frenziedly tearing itself to pieces; he is right there – in the Russian people's common sense and healthy instinct now dimmed and warped by the loud slogans thrust upon it. He is there, because the people itself has not yet had its say: others have been speaking for it. Having been taken aback by the suddenness and scale of the upheaval, it kept silent, waiting and seeing, and then those "others" suddenly assaulted it, threw it into confusion and awakened the beast in it.

The common man was given the taste of his neighbour's blood... Intoxicated by it, he rushes about in mindless despair, committing one murder after another – while they are taking this moral despair for socialism!

So far, the nightmare is gaining in scale and intensity, but the crisis is imminent: the nation which has been building up its state over the centuries in the face of adversity and relying on its common sense mostly, is bound to survive. It will certainly wake up and make amends for all the damage done, even if this takes centuries... The people will have the last say!

To work or not to work...

Welfare in the US and its recipients

A black person came up to me one day in San Francisco and asked me to give him 25 cents. I was taken aback, but nonetheless gave him the money. Begging didn't fit in against the backdrop of the wealthy city.

Local bums lay strewn out over the lawn, their carefree poses making a moving sight. My companion, an energetic businesslike young man quickly explained to me that it was not polite to stare at poor people, to look agape at other's misfortune. They were broken people whom it was no longer possible to help because they themselves did not want any help. But asked, "Is it possible to help those who want to be helped?" "Sure," the businessman shrugged his shoulders. "You should talk to someone from the welfare office."

Soon thereafter I was introduced to Miriam Rozentals, a social worker who has been involved in social work for ten years. For every category of the needy there is a separate programme: for those who have lost their jobs, for large families, for the elderly... dozens of programmes in all.

The municipal welfare department recalls a case not long ago involving a forty-year-old construction worker named John Bradley. He was very healthy (probably that is why he didn't bother to apply for medical insurance), a hard worker, was paid and lived reasonably well, even though he had no friends or relatives. But then one day he was picked up on the street by an ambulance having acquired from somewhere a serious infection. The doctors more than once almost gave up hope of saving Bradley and even considered switching off the life-supporting machinery that at a great cost was keeping him alive (Bradley was treated at the taxpayers' expense). But after numerous operations he was finally released though he had great difficulty getting around. But that was not the end of his hardships. When he got out of the hospital he found out that he no longer had an apartment as it had been taken away from him after he failed to pay three months' rent, and along with that his

Retired Americans

apartment had been robbed. John became completely disheartened.

It was then that the social services came to his rescue (they have a representative in every hospital). He filled out the papers necessary to begin receiving sick benefits. But he was not able to start receiving any money for two months (even in America there are plenty of formalities one is forced to deal with). So the Irish community came to his aid. National communities are another important link in the chain of social protection.

Many people who immigrate to the US become welfare recipients. What's surprising is that among them one finds very few former Soviet citizens. Of the five thousand former Soviets who have immigrated to San Francisco over the past two years, only 100 are on welfare.

Ms Miriam Rozentals' department also provides aid to the elderly, chiefly those who don't receive a retirement check. Any person who is a legal resident of the United States and is over the age of 65, has no source of income and has fewer than 2,000 dollars in his or her bank account has the right to receive such assistance.

In New York, for example, the federal government pays 400 dollars a month to such people and state also provides them with food and clothing stamps. In the wealthier state of California the elderly receive 630 dollars a month and taxi stamps and the right to live in cheap government housing.

If they wish, the elderly can spend their days in "kindergartens for the elderly" which they are bussed to every morning. The kindergartens themselves are similar to clubs where retired people can interact and where they don't have to feel themselves alienated from life.

Another programme – home help – is designed for those who because of their age or health are not capable of cleaning up their apartment, making themselves meals, doing the shopping, calling the doctor or washing themselves. Such people are attended to at the cost of 1,200 dollars a month to the state.

If elderly mothers and fathers live with their grown children, then the money is received by the children, regardless of their salaries. Social services make sure that the money spent on the mother and father is spent well. A society in which many rich people live who pay correspondingly high taxes can afford to care for its elderly.

If a person cannot (or, as is sometimes the case, does not wish to) look for work, a package of general aid is given to him or her. In San Francisco such a person receives 375 dollars a month and 90 dollars' worth of food stamps, assistance which he or she has the right to receive for as long as he or she wishes. If the person without work has a family with at least one child, that family receives 675 dollars a month and 250 dollars in food stamps. For every child more, the family receives an additional 100 dollars a month.

Is it possible to live on this income? If one has to pay for his or her own housing, then the answer is that it is not likely. However, if one has one's own house that was paid off by one's parents or lives in a cheap state apartment, this money is enough for more than just the bare necessities in life. So whole generations of Americans (especially persons of colour) grow up and never work a day in their lives. It seems to me of course that there are relatively few who are willing to vegetate in this way. But whatever the case may be, such people are a real headache for the US. Some readers may say "If only we had such problems!" But realize that one all too frequently comes across the destitute on the streets of America.

Ronald Reagan during his presidency supported a reduction in the money spent on welfare, claiming that it led to the moral degradation of America. But Congress reaffirmed the right of the nation's poor to receive help from the government.

Boris Balkarei

SAN FRANCISCO – SEATTLE – MOSCOW

Forty-one-year-old **Irina Sosunova,** the Chairman of the organizing committee of the Aleko Free Way commercial auto-rally around Western Europe, graduated from a technical college as an engineer and later received a PhD in philosophy. For 17 years she worked at the Institute of Sociology of the USSR Academy of Sciences. Irina sees no contradictions between science and business. She believes that "smart people must not be poor." Sociologic surveys, if they are well done, are "a good product which will always be in high demand."

Just recently Irina became Director-General of the minor enterprise IRLYUS, which will receive orders on studying the market situation, and making forecasts in the field of social, political, economic and ecological situations in the country and in relations among various ethnic groups.

She is surprised that the government pays practically no attention to sociology. And so do the authors of economic programme. Though to neglect public reaction to this or that idea of the government means to destroy this idea. A few years ago Irina and her colleagues at the Center of Social, Political and Ideological Processes predicted the emergence of crisis-prone situations in a number of this country's regions, among them the Baltics and the Caucasus.

When she returned home in the summer of 1989 after a motor-run around East European countries, Irina predicted the coming revolutionary changes in those countries. And she was right. In a few weeks she is leaving on a motor-run to Madrid and back. And she is going to forecast the prospects of cooperation between the West and the USSR. Will motor-run help sociology?

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Forty-four-year-old diplomat **Akio Kawato** was recently appointed head of the Information Department of the Japanese Embassy in Moscow. "My appointment took place at a very 'hot' period in the development of Japanese-Soviet relations," he says. "There's no time to linger. We know too little about each other."

An expert on the Soviet Union, who has an excellent knowledge of our culture and history, Kawato dreams of a Japanese information "boom" in the USSR. Regular news-conferences, meetings of young journalists and diplomats, seminars and lectures for professional experts on Japan and those who are simply interested in that country, demonstrations of Japanese programmes on Soviet television, including lessons in the Japanese language — all this is but a part of the diplomat's plans. A group of young Soviet journalists from eleven major newspapers will shortly leave for Japan. They will be followed by a team of TV-journalists, and at the end of March a big photo-exhibition "Japan" is to be held in Moscow. The news agency TASS will take part in it.

Kawato graduated from Tokyo State University, one of the most prestigious in Japan. He finished a post-graduate course at Harvard University. He recalls that time without any warm feelings, since "dry politicized sovietology" never attracted him. Upon graduation from Harvard he worked at the philology department of Moscow State Unviersity and read a lot of Pushkin and Chekhov. Here in Moscow he met his future wife — a student from Denmark, who studied Russian folk crafts. "Since that time," he says with a smile, "Russian language has been not only an element of my professional training, but to some extent a means of communication in my family."

S. Butin

Dzarasov's "convertible" ruble

Twenty five pages of typed text have made 63-year-old professor **Soltan Dzarasov** winner of the prize offered by the Foers International Fund for the best project on how to make ruble convertible. Almost a year has elapsed since then, but the situation with the ruble has not changed for the better. And the economist believes that the Soviet government is doing everything in its power to prevent the ruble from becoming convertible.

Dzarasov regards his financial project as part of his alternative concept of a change to a market economy. His plan is very simple: in order to bring down the growing interest in foreign currency and raise the prestige of the ruble, it is necessary to rebuild the country's economic structure by increasing the share of consumer and exported goods. The country won't be able to achieve this without the help of foreign capital. To let foreign capital into the country, we should first provide the "outer" convertibility of the ruble, by introducing, for instance, a ten-ruble banknote, backed-up by gold. The next step is to stop the printing-press, freeze wages and immobilize 15-20 billion rubles annually.

Dzarasov was born in North Ossetia. Upon graduation from Moscow Economic Institute he returned home, where he was head of the department of economics at an agricultural college, and then worked as the director of a collective farm for two years, but due to his misunderstanding with local authorities was recommended for work... at the regional party committee. When he moved to Moscow he taught at Moscow State University, where in 1969 received a PhD in economics. His thesis was devoted to a "seditious" field – self financing.

He taught party functionaries at the Academy of social sciences of the CPSU Central Committee and studied the life of the party apparatus. He never concealed his attitude towards the party bureaucracy. In 1989 his fellow-countrymen nominated him to represent North Ossetia in Soviet Parliament. Dzarasov believes that he had lost his political battle due to the dissatisfaction of the local party apparat with his democratic views. However, the professor does not miss his political career, after all economists in this country also have their hands full.

K.Isakov

The 50-year-old minister of internal affairs of Bavaria **Edmund Stoiber** has never been in love with communists. For a long time he worked under the former prime-minister of the land Franz Josef Straus, notorious for his negative attitude towards socialist ideas. Stoiber held the post of General Secretary of the conservative Bavarian Christian Social Union. And now he has been ordered to establish supervision over the work of the Democratic Socialist Party, which succeeds Socialist Unity Party of Germany.

He believes that the political activity of the Democra-

tic Socialist Party "is still based on Marxist-Leninist doctrine." He says that the party actively cooperates with "left-wing extremist groupings," and therefore is socially dangerous. However, Stoiber believes that the DSP may one day become a truly democratic party respectful of the constitution.

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The international organization Agudath Israel (Jewish union) has appointed a US citizen, **Alexander Rubinovich,** as its official representative in Moscow.

Rubinovich was born in Russia during WWII into the family of a Moscow University professor. His father was an expert in electronics and first generation computers. Alexander grew up in post-war Moscow, where he finished school and fell in love with cinematography. He worked at the Mosfilm studios and at the studio of scientific and popular films. At the age of thirty, he emigrated. In Israel he continued working in the movies and was even a front-line cameraman during the 1973 war. In 1975 he moved to New York and completely changed his way of life. He became a very religious person and began studying the theory and practice of Judaism.

In Moscow Alexander Rubinovich is to carry out educational work in contact with the Moscow Jewish religious comunity. Educational groups are being formed for all who are willing to learn Hebrew and the history and traditions of the ancient people and to read the Talmud and Torah. They've also opened a religious academy, where young men will be educatted to teach the basics of Judaism and become rabbis. Separate classes are conducted for girls and women. They've founded a Sunday school for children too. By shere chance it is located in the buildings of the Moscow school No.182, where Alexander Rubinovich used to study.

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Forty-seven-year-old Singapore painter **Tan Swie Hian** paints at night, and during the day he works as press attache at the French Embassy in Singapore. But this is only a whim of Singapore's leading painter. His house, open to visitors, is located in the city's "bad

reputation" district. It's a world of red lights and pubs, a demimonde in a modern world of towering concrete blocks. Tan likes to observe the faces of the respectable public who come to look at his paintings in the midst of the squalor.

Tan Swie Hian is a Renaissance man of the Orient. Although his paintings could easily guarantee him a comfortable life, he prefers to earn his living in a different way. Proficient in Mandarin, several Chinese dialects, English, French and Malay, he is a translator, writer, poet, calligrapher, engraver, sculptor and costume designer. And in the meantime, one of his paintings was bought for the French national collection, and he was elected a corresponding member for Southeast Asia of the French Academy of Fine Arts.

After his first one-man exhibition in 1973 Tan stopped painting for four years to devote himself to meditation. Meditation, he says "silences your mind and when your mind is silent, it is free." A former bodybuilder, Tan is not an ascetic. However, it would have been rather hard to live the life of a renunciate in his district.

How to fight sex offenders

The argument over whether or not criminals should be punished and if they deserve humane attitude of the society, is eternal indeed. The criminal growth rate plays into the hand of those who call for stricter punishment and a wider use of the death penalty and this is only natural. But even American society, used to polar opinions and quite tolerant, has not heard for a long time a call for a wide-scale and systematic castration of sexual offenders.

In a recently published book *An Effective Treatment for Sex Offenders* its author, resident of New York **Victor T. Cheney** says that what they have in the U.S. Criminal Justice System to rehabilitate the sex criminal is mostly no treatment at all. In only a small percentage of cases is there sufficient money and talent available to turn the maniac into a normal man.

Cheney is displeased with the fact that the original sentence of a sex criminal "just like that of a regular" criminal, is often shortened, and the prisoner is freed for "good behaviour," although in fact he simply had no chance to "misbehave." And if incarcerated, it is usually to a prison or mental hospital where there is no special programme for sex offenders. As a result the man leaves prison with an awful yearn, rather than being cured of it.

Moreover, most of these crimes do not even result in apprehending of the criminal. And if the offender is apprehended, a just sentence is rarely passed, says Cheney. According to him, sex criminals have their modern equivalents of Sodom and Gomorrah in America. "Blacks have their ghettos," he writes, "Chinese their Chinatowns, artists have their Art Colonies, and sex criminals are drawn to San Francisco, New Orleans or New York City. There a sex crime that might be viewed with disgust and diligently prosecuted in Salt Lake City will scarcely raise an eyebrow."

"Sex offenders," continues Cheney, "are driven out of areas where 'fag-bashing,' is a common Saturday night pastime and drift to San-Francisco, which has gay bars and baths. The police in these areas cannot arrest half the deviant population. Indeed, if they did, they might find themselves explaining to City Fathers, who, themselves are deviant."

If the above-mentioned views of Victor Cheney will almost certainly meet with disgust on the part of liberal American intellectuals and human rights activists, he will find support in small-town America. Though, it's not clear how they will react to the remedy he suggests: castrating sex criminals. He describes this as an effective treatment. Cheney, who due to his age, cannot be accused of rape or perversion, believes that "there's really no big sacrifice to one's manhood, but rather a great relief to be free of the troublesome sexual tension which causes deviant thoughts and behavior."

The cracked bell

Art tells us that our chief ordeal is yet to come, that we are not prepared for it

Victor Bozhovich

For two years in a row Soviet films have received the Berlin Festival's Silver Bear, the special jury prize, which is second in significance. Thus last year it went to Kira Muratova's *Asthenic Syndrome*, this year to Victor Aristov's *Satan*. Still earlier Vadim Abdrashitov's *Servant* also won a prize at the Festival. The films are three versions of a pitiless diagnosis of our society's morality.

I hear some vexedly note that I have again pinpointed moral issues and sundry other elusive notions, at a time when one should stress the country's disintegration, mounting crime, the menace of hunger and civil war, the impotence of the authorities, and other sickening worries, which may include heaven knows what depending on one's political outlook. Indeed morals seem of no concern to anyone but those intellectuals who never grow tired of asking such questions, they say.

To make a long story short, everything is reduced to that celebrated formula which Bertolt Brecht so cynically and challengingly coined long ago and which runs roughly as follows:

First feed our bellies,
Only then teach us to live honestly.
.....
First bread, morals later!

However, it transpires – and this conclusion, which is to be deduced from our own bitter experience, needs at last to be concisely worded – that a people whose moral mainstays are subverted can no longer maintain even the most elementary physical conditions of existence. They stop sowing grain, building houses, buying and selling, and bringing up children, overshadowed and petrified by frustration and despondency.

Thus, the main characters in the films live as if in a nightmare. They act by no means of their own volition, even though at times they are most energetic; actually it is some other external force that operates within and through them. Time and again their behaviour is unmotivated either psychologically or from the angle of everyday living. However, what we see really are parables, not slices from real life.

There bleeds through the odd master-servant relationship and the muddle of the seemingly unnecessary ups and downs in Abdrashitov's picture the inexorable logic of a perverted life where no one is himself, with everyone a doppelganger, an "ersatz" – like the former chauffeur conducting a choir that sings contrary to what he seeks. The entire scene is impartially observed by a stakeout of faceless figures garbed in identical grey suits who await the signal to instantaneously replace the decor.

I cannot shake off the impression that the entire scene was prompted by the Fifth Congress of the Film Makers' Union, when in the meeting chamber of the Great Kremlin Palace the then uncustomary political passions ran high while imperturbable grey-garbed young men, stationed at the doors and in the aisles kept their professional cool.

As we look back on all this we find it hard to refrain from sarcastically grinning at ourselves. We thought ourselves daring iconoclasts, however we had simply been given the chance to raise fuss under the attentive eye of the powers that be. Which is no doubt responsible for the frustration felt at the collapsed illusions and out-of-joint time that generated the petrified, frozen world of the *Asthenic Syndrome*.

Satan is normal

Let us not delude ourselves though: the strange, frightening, amusing and pitiful characters fussing and grimacing on the screen are really us. Their rage, frustration, fatigue, beggarly suffocating troublesome existence is the familiar life we ourselves lead today. It is we, who in passing hate, humiliate and insult one another, who blind ourselves to our neighbours, who doze off on the go, who giggle at funerals, who mechanically step over a collapsed person, who argue, meanwhile turning a deaf ear to the views of others.

Aristov's *Satan* came out somewhat later, at a time when we had already grown aware of many things. Perhaps that explains its somewhat illustrative character starting with its frankly formulated title. The connection with Dostoyevsky is evident. The main character, a young man, Vitaly Sergeyevich by name, is a present-day Rodion Raskolnikov, however, completely devoid of remorse as his conscience is fully atrophied. Murder, rape, depravity, extortion, blackmail are far from all the crimes he has perpetrated or might perpetrate. Yet he is no pathological criminal: on the contrary, he is quite **normal.** It is the exposure of the normality in the abnormal, of the ordinary in the appalling that generates the well nigh hypnotic impact of many of this picture's sequences.

Aristov's debut *Gunpowder* gave us ninety minutes of the inferno of war with its nightmarish air raids, when one, continuously assailed by death, felt totally helpless. One thought it impossible generally to live in such conditions; nevertheless, people did live, even discharged assigned duties. *Gunpowder* presents the hell of destruction, that occurs each minute and second; it is death-steeped space and time.

Irakly Kvirikadze's *Comrade Stalin Goes to Africa*

Surging spirit?

Something similar is sensed in *Satan*, whose entire atmosphere swarms with the germs of evil – recall Dostoyevsky's "trichins." The streets, the houses, the figures and faces of the people in these streets, the flats and their furniture, the restaurants and the theatre, are all steeped in evil as if overgrown with mould. In this atmosphere the main character is totally at ease. With mincing steps he now appears, now disappears, smiling as he stares at you with his clear, shameless eyes. His power and invulnerability derive from his being one of us.

Indeed, in what respect really does Alyona Nikolayevna, the mother of the little girl he has killed, differ? A nomenclatura VIP, one of the city's first ladies, a vulture and provincial Messalina, she likewise lives on the other side of good and evil. However when she suddenly realizes that her daughter is dead, the instant of genuine suffering singes us. Yet even her sufferings are barren, non-cathartic, merely plunging her deeper into the anarchy of evil: we realize that had opportunity knocked, she would have unhesitatingly sacrificed strange children solely to save her own daughter.

So to sum up: these three pictures offer three answers to the question of what is happening to us.

Several years ago overwhelmed by the euphoria of perestroika, we thought the most difficult times were behind us, that the acquisition of freedom would be lighthearted and happy. We expected art to show if not optimism, as we were already sick of its official aspect, then, at least, something sweepingly free, even be it tragic, such as Abuladze's *Repentance*. Imagine our surprise, when instead of the tolling of the tocsin, we heard the faltering intonation of a cracked bell. Many were disappointed, frustrated. What are you doing, you artists, they wondered? Where is your sense of the zeitgeist? Where is that surging spirit and delight of freedom?

Once again have we seen for ourselves that art is cleverer, that the intuition of the artist runs ahead. Art tells us that our main ordeal is yet to come, that we are not prepared for it. We have yet to win the right to freedom, to which end we must restructure our own souls. The cracked bell is merely in tune with our own minds and hearts. Until we find within us the strength to acquire that inner dignity, the cracked bell will continue to falteringly ring for each of us.

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The Russian Lent

Voluntary suffering or forced dieting

Whenever the Russian Lent is mentioned, some will no doubt think that that refers to the Soviet Union's present dramatic food situation. In all truth shop shelves are bare, milk is unavailable in the bigger cities, while in smaller towns bread is rationed – 400 grammes a day. So what fast is actually implied?

This is an ordinary fast that the Russian Orthodox Church tells all believers to observe, with the exception of the sick, the pregnant and small children. Generally speaking Orthodox Christians observe four periods of fasting, the Fast of St.Peter's at the start of summer, which is from two to four weeks in duration, the Fast of the Assumption, which lasts from August 14 to August 27, the Fast of Christmas, which lasts from November 28 through January 6, and the seven-week long Lent, which precedes Easter. This longest of all four fasts is strictest, forbidding all food of animal origin, such as meat, fish, eggs, butter, and dairy products. In olden times even vegetable oil was forbidden while over Lent's last so-called Passion Week, the pious generally ate only little and even then no cooked meals. Why then such voluntary self-torture?

In the fourth century Basil the Great, Bishop of Cappodocia, observed that the strength the body lost the soul gained. True, he added that to restrain from partaking of food was no praiseworthy fasting, inasmuch as to truly fast one had perforce to depart from evil, restrain one's tongue, temper, falsehood and malice. In short, bodily fasting was supplementary as basic was to strengthen spirit and purify soul by prayer, repentance and lofty reflection. Special heed need be paid to what one says, does and thinks.

On such days idle amusement, thoughtless time wasting, and hours spent in front of the TV out. Who am I? Why do I exist? Fasts represent a most opportune time for reflection. Obsessed by pointless cares of daily life, we forget to lift our eyes to the Heavens or even look around to wonder how our kith and kin fare.

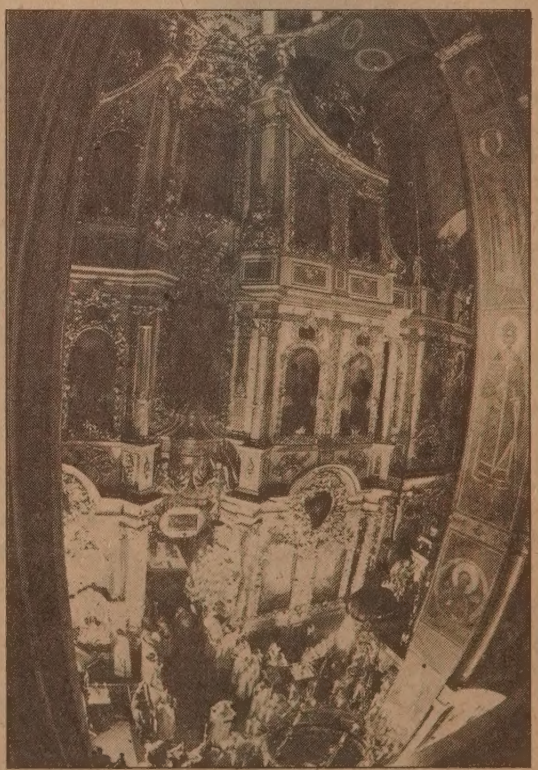
Yet the paramount commandment Christ handed down is to love one another. The Church's real mission is to remind us of that, of the responsibility we bear for our neighbours. Only after protracted effort and patient, self-restraint can we restore the soul to its paramount role.

Read at Lent at the close of each church service is the prayer of Efraim of Syria, fourth-century clergymen, poet and philosopher. Though brief and simple, it contains everything from which we must deliver ourselves and to which we must necessarily aspire. In church it is read in old Church Slavonic, as this is rich poetic, language in which services are conducted in the Orthodox Church. The great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin produced a fine translation of it into Russian, which in translation into English runs as follows:

"O Ruler of my days! Ward off from me
The evil angel of dispondency
And sloth; and let not from my lips be heard
The sharp repeating of the idle word;
Save me from lust, that snake which lives within;
And let me not be blind to my own sin,
Blind to my brother's trespass let me,
Quicken the spirit of consent in me,
Of love, long-suffering and of chastity."

(Written in 1836, the title of this poem is "Desert Fathers and Virtuous Women")

Lent girds us for Easter. The Church summons us to concentrate on our soul and undertake bodily and spiritual efforts to fully enjoy the delights of Easter night after the seven-weeks fast ends. This year the Orthodox celebrate Easter on April 7.



Divine liturgy at the Vladimir Cathedral of the Holy Assumption
Photo by A. Kosits

Olga Bai

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